Marxism Today

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Editorial Comments

Martin Jacques — Universities and Capitalism—The Present Crisis

Jack Cohen — Big Business in Britain

Georges Marchais and Roland Leroy — For the Advancement of Culture

Document

Communist Party of Portugal — Statement on the Elections to the Constituent Assembly

Discussion

P. K. Hall — Inflation and Marxist Theory

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Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

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Editorial Comments

THE Communist Party in its evidence to the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth established by the Labour Government, provides an impressive array of facts, figures and arguments disproving the propaganda that the distribution of wealth and of income in Great Britain has become more equal in recent years.[1]

It emphasises on the contrary that:

> "The outstanding characteristic of wealth distribution (in this country) this century is its stability—in spite of a wide range of apparently progressive tax changes which began with the reform of estate duty in 1909. . . ."

It exposes the ways in which the real amount of wealth in the possession of the very rich is "dispersed" thus reducing the amount paid in tax:

> ". . . Much of the dispersion of wealth actually assessed for tax is simply the consequence of tax avoidance with estates being put into 'discretionary' trusts or seemingly split up within families to minimise tax liability. . . ."

Over the last 60 odd years:

> ". . . the proportion of the nation's wealth represented by equity shares has greatly increased and the market value of these shares increasingly understates the net worth of the company sector. . . . According to J. R. S. Revell (an expert in this field) the richest one per cent of wealth holders own 81 per cent of personally held stocks and shares in companies. . . ."

Statistics seeking to prove greater equality of wealth distribution are often misleading, it is argued, because two sorts of asset are confused and regarded as equal variants of "wealth". On the one hand there are the homes, pensions and improved economic position of limited numbers of better off workers and "on the other hand, the wealth which confers economic power and permits the exploitation of other people's labour, that is, the ownership of the various production resources". This latter has, if anything, "become more concentrated".

Facts about the distribution of income tell the same story. Even if it is correct that there has been a change in the distribution of income towards greater equality there is considerable doubt about the persistence of the ameliorative trend in recent years.

> "Writing in 1967, R. J. Nicholson found that equalisation of incomes came to an end in the mid-fifties which he attributed to rapidly rising unearned incomes and the end of a decline in salary incomes relative to wages. Six years later Professor Atkinson confirms that no further gains by the poorer half of income recipients occurred in the 1960s. Between 1957 and 1967 the share of the poorest 60 per cent of recipients in total pre-tax income fell from 34 per cent to 33 per cent; their share in post-tax income . . . from 37 per cent to 36 per cent".

FROM THE "BLACK PAPER" STABLE

One hundred years ago Robert Lowe was fighting his last ditch stand against the extension of the franchise. Nothing could be worse, he said, than by this means "to subvert the existing order of things, and to transfer power from the hands of property and intelligence, and so to place it in the hands of men whose whole life is necessarily occupied in the daily struggle for existence". A conspiracy of the "unfit" would "swamp and obliterate not only property but intelligence, culture, toleration, patriotism".

This identification of culture, intelligence, the whole of civilised values with the middle class ("property") is the keynote of the latest publication from the "Black Paper" stable—a book entitled *Education, Equality and Society*[2] edited by Bryan Wilson, with long contributions from Wilson himself (a sociologist from All Souls College, Oxford), G. H. Bantock, the late Cyril Burt and the egregious Rhodes Boyson. But times have changed, universal suffrage long conceded; it is the drive to equality in educational provision which, in the editor's view, now threatens "educational and social diversity, the maintenance of excellence, and the persistence of climates within which sensitivity, creativity, civic concern and intellect can flourish". In fact all civilised values are once more under threat—in particular from the move towards comprehensive education, the establishment of a common curriculum for all, and the abolition of streaming and other forms of differentiation between children.

The whole book presents typically conservative arguments, but as the product of

[1] We hope to publish the full 5,000-word text of the evidence in our August issue.

[2] Bryan Wilson (editor)—*Education, Equality and Society*, Allen & Unwin, £4.25.

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leading conservative ideologists in education it is worth serious attention. Like many statements of this kind the authors tend to support *past* reforms ("In some earlier age it is conceivable that all the writers in this volume might have campaigned for a greater measure of equality in education, and that all might have supported a variety of educational reforms"—Bryan Wilson), but all without exception hold up their hands in horror at what is happening today—and indeed demand that the clock be turned back some 20 to 30 years, selection and internal school differentiation reintroduced and, where possible, reinforced. The elitist system must be retained at all costs.

DOCTRINE OF INNATE INFERIORITY

As for the quality of the arguments presented, Marxists will take a particular interest in the late Cyril Burt's attempt to provide an historical interpretation of the fact that, on average, a much higher proportion of middle class children have higher IQs than working-class children. This is not due to the way the tests are constructed, the kind of questions set, etc. as Marxists and others have argued. On the contrary it is the inevitable result of centuries of social mobility. "Ever since the days of the legendary Dick Whittington", writes Burt, "and indeed long before his time, bright and energetic youngsters from the poorest homes have steadily worked their way up to the merchant of professional classes, while the duller and lazier children of the middle and upper classes have tended to drift downwards". So "with the free social mobility which has obtained in England", Burt concludes, "the emergence of distinct social classes, *based largely on differences of innate capacity*, was a natural consequence" (my italics, ed.).

There we have the doctrine that informs all these essays. The working class of this country is innately inferior—just as Jensen argues the Blacks are in the United States. The defence of civilisation requires the dominance of the middle class who monopolise (as Lowe claimed) both property and intelligence (culture); while allowing a limited degree of social mobility. It is clear that this theory, derived from the interpretation of the results of mental testing, insistently requires such an historical support. So (since historians could not conceivably supply it) the psychologist turns historian in his spare time to dreg up plausible data. So much for the "standards of excellence" that this movement claims to defend. It is a shoddy rationale on which to base a whole educational programme designed to preserve existing elitist procedures.

The two essays by Wilson and Bantock—and another by Lucas, an Oxford philosopher—are worth study as expressing conservative political ideology, rather in the tradition of Michael Oakeshott. Thus Wilson decries "the contemporary rejection of categories and boundaries", arguing that, with the abolition of streaming and the development of interdisciplinary studies, schools "have lost their old structure and stability".

Lucas is prepared to countenance the idea of equality of educational opportunity as a goal, but not equality as such—that is, the deliberate channelling of resources to the disadvantaged rather than (as at present) to the advantaged.

Rhodes Boyson believes that equality of opportunity is anyway a chimera and that "the stability and security of society is equally important". This country, he adds, is "a strange but potent mixture of aristocracy plutocracy and meritocracy", and long may it so remain. "A large private sector of grammar type schools" maintained by the voucher system and by fee-payers must be developed to support the existing system.

Though crudely expressed and ill thought out, Boyson's concluding essay reveals clearly where all this conservative ideological theorising would lead us. On the principle of "know your enemy" this book is worth study as the most comprehensive recent statement of reactionary educational theory.

PLANNING CITIES

Lawrence and Wishart enter what is for them a new field with the publication of *Planning Cities* by W. Houghton Evans[3]. For the first time in any language the book brings together essential texts and illustrations necessary for an understanding of town planning, drawing on material from early origins in classical times right through to the architectural theory of today.

Whilst the book will be valuable to the specialist and the student, it will be especially helpful to the citizen who feels he must challenge much of what is being perpetrated today in the name of planning, and who wants to play an informed part in shaping the future of his town.

[3] W. Houghton Evans—*Planning Cities*, Lawrence & Wishart, £7.00.

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Analysing conflicting contemporary tendencies, the author attacks the current vogue for "trend" planning, which belittles the power of ideas (and ideals) and amounts to a blind surrender to market economy.

Describing how a reluctance to "take sides" was to lead Le Corbusier (and many others) into an a-political zeal for technical solutions, he shows how this becomes perverted to promote the de-humanisation of the urban environment which is fast becoming recognised as one of the major social problems of our times.

The connection between effective town planning and Socialism, so far as the modern world is concerned, is emphasised by the author, and in discussing experiences in Britain as well as the lessons, both negative and positive, of developing Socialist countries, Houghton Evans advances the elements of a Marxist theory of town planning.

TOWARDS THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CUBA

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba—meeting on the 83rd anniversary of the founding by Jose Marti of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, which, at the end of the 19th century led the Cuban struggle for independence from Spanish colonial rule—has decided to convene the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in December of this year.

It set up a Central Preparatory Committee, presided over by Fidel Castro, to guide the drafting of the Congress documents, which will be submitted for discussion by the Party and people, before being presented to Congress.

Representation at Congress will consist of one delegate for every 100 Party members or candidate members, to be elected at one of the six Provincial Assemblies, or in the Isle of Pines Region, or at one of the meetings of Party organisations in the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior. In addition, Communists of a number of work centres selected because of their political or economic importance, will directly elect delegates to Congress.

Congress agenda will include discussion on the record of the Cuban Party and people in establishing the basis for the construction of socialism; a programme of future Party activity on questions of home and foreign policy; the Party Rules; the draft Constitution; a plan for economic development; the role of the People's organs of power and the election of the Central Committee.

The PB of the CC of the Party called on the working people to participate in the preparatory tasks of the Congress and in the discussion of its main documents. It expressed the certainty:

> "that the working class and all our people will decisively contribute to the creative effort to make 1975—when we also commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the first Communist Party of Cuba—a year of new and more important victories of socialist construction."

The main watchword for the First Congress is

"TOWARDS THE 1st CONGRESS FOR NEW VICTORIES FOR OUR HOMELAND AND FOR SOCIALISM."

The main slogan

"The strength of the Party lies in its close ties with the masses."

SOCIALIST ECONOMIES

Marie Lavigne's "The Socialist Economies of the Soviet Union and Europe"[4] translated by T. G. Waywell is a valuable contribution to the discussion of current economic developments in the European socialist countries. Its particular merit is that it brings together a great deal of up-to-date material relating both to the Soviet Union and all the socialist countries of Eastern Europe except Albania, thus facilitating comparative study.

Mme. Lavigne examines the structural framework of the socialist economies: economic institutions, the management of units of production and distribution, industrial and agricultural enterprises and commercial organisations. Part 2 discusses operational mechanisms: the strategy of growth and the means employed to achieve it, planning methods and the tools of economic intervention. Finally, Part 3 considers the international economic relations of the socialist countries both between themselves and with the developing and developed countries.

The picture which emerges is one of considerable and to many perhaps surprising diversity both as regards historical development and current policies. All the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have in recent years, for example, adopted measures of economic reform designed to bring the previous highly centralised planning systems more into line with present-day

[4] Martin Robertson, £6.95.

(Concluded on p. 224)

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Universities and Capitalism—The Present Crisis

Martin Jacques

The aim of this article is to contribute towards the elaboration of a strategy for the work of Communist academics. With this end in mind, I will explore two main areas: the role and position of the university in capitalist society and the nature of academics as a social group.

PART I—THE ROLE AND POSITION OF THE UNIVERSITY

The Role of the University

Historically, the role of the university has varied as according to the precise nature and degree of development of capitalist society but, in general terms, its functions may be listed as follows:

(i) The transmission (via the "teaching process") of ideological concepts and scientific knowledge within an ideological framework which together serve to legitimate, reinforce and reproduce the existing social relations. This statement does not preclude the possibility of the teaching of "counter-ideologies" but it does presume that the dominant taught ideology will be that of the bourgeoisie.

(ii) The production of new scientific and ideological concepts (i.e. the "research function").[1]

(iii) The training of various types of intellectuals for positions of authority and leadership in, for example, industry, the church, the judiciary, the civil service, education and the army.

(iv) In addition to (iii) above, the training and reproduction of a larger body of technical, administrative and intellectual wage-labour.

It should be added, however, that the university has not always performed each of these functions nor, indeed, performed them in the same way. Rather, as we would expect, both the number and nature of these functions has changed as the relationship between the university and capitalist society itself has changed. In this context, we can, broadly speaking, identify three main phases in the development of the university since the bourgeois revolution.[2]

The first phase saw the various changes in Oxbridge during the seventeenth century, with the initial "opening up" of these institutions after 1640 and then the relative "clampdown" which followed the Restoration. These changes involved functions (i), (ii) and (iii) of our classification.[3]

The second phase witnessed various relatively belated (compared, for example, with Germany) changes in the university system in the second half of the nineteenth century which were largely a response, often of a "local" character, to the scientific and technological needs of British industry. They included the establishment of various new (so-called "redbrick") universities and the introduction for the first time of teaching and research in a number of scientific disciplines. At the same time, there were important changes in the nature of Oxbridge which together broke the virtual monopoly held by ecclesiastics over education there. In all, these innovations marked the widening of the first three functions of the university and the "birth-pangs" of the fourth function.[4]

The third phase of the university system concerns the role of the university in the era of monopoly capitalism and widespread state intervention. This phase can be dated from the various changes that were made at the end of the First World War,[5] but the most important developments came after 1945 with, for example, the emergence of the state as the main source of university finance, a series of increases in student

[1] The points made in (i) above about the class nature of those concepts are again applicable here.

[2] In this context, it should be said that the *Scottish* universities followed a significantly different pattern.

[3] C. P. Hill, *The Century of Revolution*, 1969, pp. 74, 121, 175, 215-7.

[4] A. H. Halsey and M. Trow, *The British Academics*, 1971, pp. 39-55. Oxbridge, of course, remained the essentially elitest centre for the education of the upper classes.

[5] For example, the creation of the University Grants Committee (UGC) in 1919; Halsey and Trow, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

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numbers, various changes in the role of the University Grants Committee (UGC)[6] and the establishment of a national salary scale for academics.[7] [8] *In toto*, these changes represented an expansion in all four of the university's functions, but clearly the most important and striking characteristic of this phase, at least in the more recent period, has been the growth in the fourth function, namely the production of skilled wage-labour.

The Growth of Higher Education in the Sixties and Seventies

I now want to examine the nature of the third phase more closely or, to be more precise, developments in the most recent period of that phase.

(a) The Robbins Expansion

The most recent major development in the university sector was the Robbins expansion of the sixties. The Robbins Report, which was published in 1963,[9] called for an increase in university numbers to almost half a million by 1980 such that approximately 17 per cent of the age-group would be in higher education by that time. It rested its case for such a growth on two main arguments: the increased demand for more skilled labour from industry, the state and education and the need for wider sections of youth to have access to the "cultural benefits" of higher education. The latter, of course, was the response of the ruling class to an important democratic demand, namely the pressure for wider access to higher education.[10] Nevertheless, the key factor was undoubtedly the increased demand for more skilled labour coming from industry and elsewhere as a result of such developments as the scientific-technological revolution and the need for a more complex hegemonic apparatus.

In the event, the Robbins expansion led to a large increase in student numbers—from 122,800 in 1962-3 to 246,800 in 1972-3.[11] It did not, however, result in any significant change in the nature of the university as an institution. Indeed, the expansion was deliberately contained within the existing concept of the university. Or, as Halsey and Trow have argued: ". . . the expansion of the 1960s has been strongly contained within the English idea of a university."[12]

This concept of the "English idea of a university", or what I shall subsequently refer to as the "liberal university", can be reduced to five basic elements: (a) a degree being "educational" rather than "vocational"; (b) a high staff-student ratio; (c) academics combining research and teaching; (d) relative autonomy of the university from the state; and (e) academic self-government within the university.[13] These elements in turn rest on the notion of the university's primary function (apart from research) being the ideological and cultural training of a "socio-intellectual *élite*". In terms of our classification, therefore, the "English idea of a university" is geared to the first three functions of the university. As a consequence, its nature and structure can be said to "predate" not only the Robbins' expansion of the sixties but also, more generally, phase three of the university's evolution which, I have suggested, is characterised by the emergence of the fourth function, namely the production of skilled wage-labour. Indeed, it has much in common with the university of phase two (and even, in some respects, that of phase one). It can thus be argued that the contemporary university (i.e. the liberal university) has, for whatever reason (and we will return to this later), only *partially* been adapted to the needs of monopoly capitalism.

(b) The Growth of the Non-University Sector

Until the early sixties, higher education was seen as more or less synonymous with the university, notwithstanding the existence of a significant non-university sector. The Robbins Report, moreover, in its emphasis on university expansion, tended to perpetuate this tradition, though it did argue that the existence of a "system" of higher education should be recognised and made explicit. The real "break" came in 1965 when the Labour Government announced that there was to be a large-scale development of higher education *outside* the universities in what was described as the "public sector".[14] This approach found concrete expression in a White

[6] The UGC was transferred from the Treasury to the DES in 1963; Halsey and Trow, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[7] Halsey and Trow, *op cit.*, pp. 61, 182-4.

[8] It should be noted that these changes have been brought about through the intervention of the state, though the universities have, up until now, still retained a large measure of autonomy.

[9] Committee on Higher Education, *Report: Higher Education*, 1963.

[10] Though it should be added that pressure tended to come largely from the middle strata.

[11] That is, full-time students, both undergraduate and postgraduate; *Education Statistics for the UK, 1974*, p. 20, Table 17.

[12] Halsey and Trow, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

[13] There are, of course, others (for example, national intake and selectivity), but I have reduced it to five in the context of the argument presented.

[14] Crosland's speech at Woolwich Polytechnic, 27/4/65; *Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES), 7/3/75, p. 15. Also Crosland's Lancaster University speech, 20/1/67, *ibid.*

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Paper in 1966 which proposed the establishment of the polytechnics on the basis of an amalgamation of various existing bodies like the colleges of technology, art and commerce.

The Tory White Paper, published in 1972, gave further impetus to these developments. Already the polytechnics had become the fastest area of expansion in higher education: the White Paper, however, envisaged a further expansion such that by 1981 there would be 750,000 students in higher education, of whom 375,000 would be in the university sector and 375,000 in the non-university sector, with 180,000 of the latter in the polytechnics.[15] Since then has come the proposal to incorporate a large number of the colleges of education into the polytechnics. The latter have thus emerged as the overwhelmingly dominant form of non-university higher education institution, as well as the main sphere of expansion in higher education as a whole.

The causes of this public sector expansion are similar to those behind the expansion of the universities but, in the case of the polytechnics, the emphasis placed upon the "demand for skilled labour" argument has, in effect, been very much greater. Indeed, the primary function of the polytechnics was seen as the production of a large volume of skilled labour and this stress has been reflected in their nature and organisation. Thus, as compared with university courses, those at polytechnics tend to be both more vocational and more varied, with the provision, for example, of part-time advanced level, full-time advanced level and full-time degree level courses. At the same time, the staff-student ratio at polytechnics *tends* to be lower,[16] the opportunities for research more limited, external public control rather greater.[17] the internal structure more hierarchical[18] and the unit cost of the education offered somewhat lower.[19] That is, in many respects the polytechnics[20] correspond much more closely to the type of institution of higher education demanded by monopoly capitalism than do the universities.

Questions Concerning the Binary System

The expansion of the sixties and seventies thus resulted in a complex system of higher education with two main components: on the one hand, the "public sector", which has increasingly come to mean the polytechnics, whose vocational character, malleability, cheaper cost, etc., most clearly conform to what might be described as the "technocratic model" of higher education preferred by monopoly capitalism and, on the other hand, the university sector which had, and has, only partially been adapted to the "technocratic model".

But why has the university only partially been adapted to the "technocratic model"? This is a question which can only really be answered by a closer examination of how the present situation has been reached.

Historical Background

The initial expansion of higher education in the early sixties, as we have already suggested, was essentially seen by the state in terms of an expansion of the existing system: that is, it envisaged the expansion not only overwhelmingly in terms of the universities but also in terms of the existing conception of the universities.[21] The reasons for this are not difficult to explain: the universities were the example to hand and therefore the obvious example to follow while, in shaping that expansion, it was inevitable that the state (notably the DES) should be forced to rely very heavily on the advice and co-operation of "leading" university administrators and academics who, for their part, by and large saw the existing university as the ideal model for higher education.

Subsequently, however, some of the disadvantages of the universities as the mode of expansion for higher education became, over time, increasingly apparent to the state and, in particular, the DES. These disadvantages revolved around the fact that while the main reason for expansion was seen as the need for more skilled wage-

[15] *Education: A Framework for Expansion*, December 1972, Cmd. 5174, pp. 35-6, 41. It should be noted, however, that the overall target for higher education was reduced to 640,000 (by 1981) in a Government announcement last autumn; THES, 29/11/74, p. 1. The White Paper also recommended the introduction of a two-year Dip. HE.

[16] Though this is a complicated question because of the different types of courses, etc, and, it should be added, is not *always* the case; for example, THES, 28/3/75.

[17] Through the local authorities primarily.

[18] Though some caution is required here because it may be that in some ways the polys are more internally democratic than the universities.

[19] Again, a complicated question; see, for example, THES, 18/4/75, p. 1.

[20] For more discussion of polytechnics, see, for example, R. Robinson, *The New Polytechnics*, 1968. It should also be noted that the polytechnics involve a somewhat different definition of higher education from the universities (i.e. the latter cater predominantly for the 18-21 age-group and older, while the polytechnics deal with a younger age-group as well). In this context, I have not dealt with the debate around further education (i.e. the 16-18 age-group, etc).

[21] Hence its adoption of many of the proposals in the Robbins Report etc.

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labour, it became increasingly evident that the universities could only meet that demand in a very general manner and at a relatively high cost; because of their commitment to an educational rather than a vocational degree on the one hand[22] and a high staff-student ratio plus the notion that academics should combine research and teaching on the other. These, however, were all essential features of the "English idea of a university", of the liberal university. In other words, the DES was coming round to the view that the liberal university was an inappropriate vehicle for the general expansion of higher education.

Indeed, this is precisely what it did decide when it came to the next round of expansion in the mid and late sixties. The rejection of this course left two possible alternatives: firstly, expansion by means of a radically-modified university system or, secondly, expansion through a specially-created non-university sector. There were a number of objections to the first course, however, all of which revolved around the position and attitude of the universities.

I will mention two here. Firstly, within the universities there was a large body of opposition to any expansion which involved a worsening of "standards" (i.e. lower staff-student ratio, less research time, two-year degrees, etc.).[23] And, secondly, there was likely to be similar opposition to the attack on university autonomy which would necessarily accompany it. In other words, the first course had real political costs. In the event, the DES opted for the second course with the polytechnics being chosen as the main vehicle for further expansion in higher education.

By the early seventies, thus, higher education consisted of two parallel spheres. But what was the relationship between them? Was the expanded university system a mistake, the consequence of "premature" decisions which were, at the time, heavily dependent on the advice of the universities? Or were the two spheres deliberately conceived of and designed to perform two different roles? The answer, as we shall see, probably lies somewhere between the two.

[22] One expression of this is the ratio of science to arts-based (including social science) students. Even the 1972 Tory White Paper envisaged a ratio of 47:53 respectively; *op. cit.*, p. 39.

[23] It should also be said that a significant (but probably minority) body of academics see "standards" not only in terms of "material" questions (i.e., staff-student ratios, library facilities, etc), but also in terms of "quality" of students. Whenever I refer to "standards" in the article in future, however, it will be purely in terms of "material" standards.

The Universities

At the time of the Robbins Report, it is clear that the expansion of higher education was seen almost solely in the context of the universities. In fact, it can be argued that, in terms of the state's present conception of higher education, the Robbins Report was an essentially limited and "half-way" document, recognising the need for expansion on the one hand but still conceiving of that expansion within the old framework on the other. Indeed, it was the recognition of this latter problem that led to the establishment of the polytechnics.

But the rejection of the universities as the channel for the further expansion of higher education, together with the creation of the polytechnics, did not necessarily mean or imply a rejection of the universities as such. On the contrary, the emergence of the polytechnics was seen as part of a more general development, namely the creation of a fully-fledged binary system embracing both universities and polytechnics with each sector performing a distinct role. In this context, the polytechnics were seen as providing a more vocationally-orientated higher education, whilst the universities were to be responsible for the training of a "socio-intellectual *élite*". Or, to put it another way, the emphasis of the polytechnics was on function (iv) of our original classification, while that of the university was more on (iii) (and (ii)—the research function).

This concept of what might be described as a fully-fledged binary system, however, emerged after the Robbins expansion of the universities and, indeed, only then over a period of some ten years.[24] In other words, it *inherited* rather than created the existing size and character of the universities.[25] The acceptance of the principle of a binary system, therefore, did not mean an acceptance of the university sector as it stood. Indeed, the elaboration of a fully-fledged binary system was increasingly seen to rest on two main developments: firstly, the expansion of the polytechnic sector and, secondly, the "reorganisation" of the university sector. It is the latter that I now want to consider.

The "Reorganisation" of the University Sector

By the late sixties, it was already evident that the state was beginning to re-assess its attitude

[24] From, for example, Crosland's 1965 speech, cited earlier, through to the present developments, i.e. it has been an ongoing process.

[25] Indeed, given the relative size of the university sector and its "training" function (i.e. socio-intellectual *élite*), there are plausible grounds for suggesting that it is too large (i.e. from the point of view of the state).

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towards the university sector. We can cite, for example, the changes in the role and autonomy of the UGC and the recommendations of the PIB and the Public Accounts Committee.[26] In general, however, these proposals were still of relatively limited significance, being largely aimed at making the universities cheaper, more efficient and less autonomous (i.e. more accountable to the DES—through the UGC).

Over the last two years, however, the state has begun to subject the university sector to much greater pressure which, though taking a largely financial form, in actual fact seems designed to effect major changes in the nature of that sector. This pressure has so far been exercised in three main ways.

Firstly, the Government has refused to allow the universities full supplementation for inflation for the present academic session (i.e. 1974-5) such that instead of receiving around £40 m. they have actually received £19 m.[27] One effect of this "squeeze" has been that some academic (and non-academic) posts falling vacant have been left unfilled[28] such that there has been a deterioration in the staff-student ratio and a gradual and "invisible" whittling away of the research time available to most academics. Secondly, academic salaries have, as a result of the Houghton award, now fallen behind those of many comparable sections in the polytechnics and have deteriorated rapidly in relation to what, previously, were relatively comparable sections in other areas of employment. Thirdly, over the last two years[29] there have been several cut-backs in the capital-spending programme for universities which must now be seen in the context of the Government's recently-declared intention of, in future, devoting a larger proportion of capital expenditure in higher education to polytechnics than universities.[30]

An important factor behind these attacks on the university sector has, of course, been the pressure for cuts in public expenditure. But, notwithstanding this, they must, above all, be seen as an integral part of the state's intention to reorganize the university sector; indeed, arguably the economic crisis has had the effect of accelerating this reorganisation.

Future Developments

Before considering the nature and significance of this reorganisation of the university sector, it would be useful to situate it more precisely within the framework of the overall restructuring of higher education. I have already argued that this restructuring process consists of two basic components; on the one hand, the expansion of the polytechnic sector and, on the other hand, the reorganisation of the universities. What, however, is the state's ultimate objective (within the "foreseeable future") with regard to the shape of higher education?

Here we can only speculate, but, in the light of the foregoing analysis, it seems reasonable to argue that the aim will be a system composed of a relatively larger polytechnic sector (including most of the colleges of education) and a relatively smaller university sector (i.e. probably slightly larger than its present size),[31] with the latter reorganised on the basis of a significant deterioration in its standards, though no doubt this deterioration will be unequally apportioned between universities such that some, notably Oxbridge,[32] will remain relatively more privileged than others.[33] Of course, whether or not the state is successful in achieving these objectives depends largely on the left's ability to oppose them at

[26] Halsey and Trow, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

[27] Indeed, for the first time since 1931, the quinquennial planning arrangement has broken down.

[28] It was estimated that by January 1975 something like 600-1,000 posts had been left unfilled; the *Financial Times*, 22/1/75, p. 17.

[29] The *Financial Times*, 22/1/75, p. 17.

[30] Until now, capital expenditure on the polytechnics has been much lower than that on the universities; for example, statement by Committee of Directors of Polytechnics printed (extracts) in *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 7/2/75, p. 11. The Government, however, has announced that the polytechnic sector has been authorised to start £20.75 m. worth of buildings in 1975-6 compared with £15 m. for the universities; THES, 7/2/75, p. 27, and 28/2/75, pp. 1, 31.

[31] The estimate for (university) student numbers in 1976-7 is 272,000 compared with the present 251,000, but this figure has already been revised downwards twice in the last three years.

[32] Indeed, even if the state engages in a "parity of cuts", Oxbridge will still be left in a relatively privileged position because of its "private sector" (i.e. the colleges) which is financed partly out of endowments.

[33] At this stage it is impossible to predict the likely "gap" between the "average" university and the "average" polytechnic. Indeed, some argue that it should be "non-existent", e.g., G. Tolley, "Houghton and After" in *Universities Quarterly*, Spring 1975, p. 127. Such a solution in the foreseeable future, however, is unlikely (and would, in any case, certainly involve a more hierarchical university sector). In this general context, though, it is important to note that the Houghton Committee envisaged broadly comparable salaries between teachers in polytechnics and universities doing the same work while the Tory White Paper envisaged a similiar staff:student ratio in the two institutions by the end of the decade, namely 10:1, which would mean a significant deterioration in the universities' ratio.

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both a tactical and strategic level, a point I shall return to later.

What then of this reorganisation? In the first instance, we should be clear that it has already begun to take place. This, in my opinion, is the real "meaning" of the present attacks on the university sector. Secondly, it is likely that these attacks will take the form of (as they already have in some cases) reducing the unit cost of university education, lowering the staff-student ratio, reducing the average research time available to academics[34] and making the universities more accountable to the state.[35] At the same time, a likely effect of the latter will be the strengthening (unless successfully countered) of the power of the top university bureaucrats and others at the expense of academic self-government (defined here to include all types of staff together with students). But these, it should be remembered, together with the concept of an educational rather than a vocational degree, are the essential characteristics of the liberal university. The reorganisation of the university sector must therefore be seen as an attack on the liberal university.

To conclude this part of the article. Earlier, I spoke of the "historical disjuncture" between the nature of the university and the "educational" needs of monopoly capitalism. It is clear that the state has, over the period since the mid-sixties, come to recognise that disjuncture and is now seeking to resolve it on the basis of a binary system of higher education consisting of an expanded "technocratic" polytechnic sector, on the one hand, and a "semi-technocratised" university sector on the other.

PART II—ACADEMICS[36]

Academics as a Social Group

It is in the context of the nature of the university and the pressures to which it is now subject—together with the crisis of bourgeois ideology—that I want to analyse the position of academics as a social group.

There are, at present, over 30,000 university academics (research and teaching).[37] How do we locate them in the class structure, how do we situate them as a social group?

By one criterion, namely their mode of remuneration, it is clear that they are in the same position as, for example, the industrial working class: that is, the sole or main means of existence of the vast majority of academics is through their ability to sell their labour-power to their employers (ultimately the state) in return for a wage. In this sense, therefore, academics must be considered as wage-labour. The behaviour and consciousness of any social group within the middle strata, however, is determined not only by its mode of remuneration but also by other factors relating to its function in society. To understand the character and consciousness of academics, therefore, we must investigate both the nature of their function in society and their wage-labour situation. In relation to the former, I want to examine two areas, namely ideology and the liberal university.[38]

Firstly, ideology. The function of academics must obviously be seen in the context of the institution in which they work, namely the university. Within that institution, the role of the academic is basically two-fold, namely research and teaching[39] or, to put it a different way, the creation and transmission of knowledge respectively. But what of that knowledge? Historically, the knowledge created and transmitted in British universities has been overwhelmingly subject to the dominance of various forms of bourgeois ideology, generally of an empiricist and positivist nature. That is, as far as their basic function is concerned, namely research and teaching, the great majority of academics have identified themselves ("consciously" or "unconsciously") with the capitalist system and, as a consequence, also with the bourgeoisie.

Liberal University

This brings us to the second question, the liberal university. The function of the liberal university has traditionally been, first, research and, secondly, the training (through teaching) of a "cadre force" (or "socio-intellectual *élite*") for positions of authority and leadership[40] in industry, the judiciary, the civil service, education, etc. Thus, in analysing the nature of the university (and therefore also the role of the academic) we are concerned not only with the ideological character of the knowledge created and trans-

[34] There are a number of other developments in relation to research which I have not considered, notably the Rothschild Report.

[35] Including, for example, the possible abolition of the UGC: Halsey and Trow, op. cit., p. 98.

[36] For the purposes of convenience, the term "academics" refers only to research and teaching staff in universities.

[37] As of December 31, 1968, the total was 30,755; Halsey and Trow, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-3.

[38] Though, in this context, we should examine other factors as well, such as the social background of academics.

[39] A third (and usually secondary) function is administration.

[40] i.e. through "coercion" and "consent" respectively.

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mitted but also the social character of the university's role and composition.

On these latter counts, the university must be seen as an essentially selective and *élitist* institution:[41] it is responsible for the training of a small minority of young people, overwhelmingly drawn from the middle strata and the bourgeoisie, in an ideology and culture[42] "befitting" their future role. (This is not to deny, of course, the existence of "oppositional" forces within the university, notably left students and academics; the university is, after all, a site of class struggle. Rather, it is to make a generalisation about the past and present role of the university.)

But what are the implications of these points concerning the nature of the liberal university for the ideology of academics? Or, to put it another way, what, historically, has been the relationship between the liberal university and academics? The primary function of a university is ideological and, as a consequence, as regards the combination of consent/coercion to be found in the *modus operandi* of all institutions, the emphasis in respect to a university is on the former rather than the latter. This is expressed in two forms: firstly, while the state, in various ways, lays down the broad framework within and by which the university operates, in fact, historically, the liberal university has—and still is—"allowed" an important degree of autonomy. Secondly, although there is now a strong tendency towards authoritarianism within the university, it remains that academics still play an extremely important role in determining how it functions and in defining its values.[43] That is, the liberal university rests in large measure on the consent and active co-operation of academics.[44]

Indeed, academics have played a big role in articulating and defending: (a) the concept of a university degree as an "educational" rather than a "vocational" process, with "educational" including not just "formal" learning but the wider notion of "character formation" as well; (b) the idea of a high staff-student ratio; (c) the notion of an academic engaging in both research and teaching; (d) the concept of autonomy; and (e) the idea of academic self-government.

In themselves, of course, these are all highly defensible educational "principles" (I will return to this later), but such "principles" must *never* be seen *solely* in the abstract, they must *also* be related to the *social* nature and role of the institution in which they operate. And, considered in this context, it remains that historically, for the great majority of academics, these five "principles" have been part of an overall view of the liberal university, which saw it as an essentially *élitist* and class institution.

Wage-Labour Position

Finally we come to the wage-labour position of academics. Two points are particularly worthy of note here. Firstly, academics have historically enjoyed, like various other middle strata groups (e.g., higher civil servants), a rather special and relatively privileged wage-labour situation in which a relatively high level of income (together with age-increments, exceptional security, etc.) has been achieved through negotiation and "automaticity" rather than collective struggle.[45]

Moreover, that relatively high level of income has, for example, traditionally enabled academics to own and live in houses situated in established "middle-class" areas. As a consequence, for this and other reasons, academics have tended to identify themselves, at an inter-personal and inter-occupational level, with various "traditionally conservative" middle strata groups like higher civil servants, doctors, solicitors, etc. Secondly, the work situation of academics has historically been of an essentially privatised nature, as expressed in their teaching and research situations.

Thus, the wage-labour position of academics has, itself, tended, on the one hand, to inhibit the growth of a collective, trade union consciousness and, on the other hand, to foster identification with various "upper" middle strata groups.

Historically, therefore, as a consequence of the nature of both their function in society and their wage-labour situation, academics have tended to identify with the existing organisation of society and its ruling groups. That is, these factors have served, on the one hand, to emphasise the "organic quality"[46] of the academic profession,

[41] Though, with the Robbins expansion, this is obviously less true than it was. Nevertheless, it remains that the proportion of students from industrial working-class backgrounds is lowest in the university sector and has changed relatively little over the past decade.

[42] It is important to see "university education" as a deliberately cultural as well as ideological process: this is perhaps most evident at Oxbridge.

[43] Indeed, as I suggested earlier, administration might be described as a third function of academics.

[44] Though, of course, this principle is subject to pressure for centralisation, with power being concentrated in the hands of the top bureaucracy and the professoriat. In this context, of course, Oxbridge is rather different.

[45] I have not discussed the reasons for this here, but they are related to the birth and historical evolution of the particular functions performed by these groups.

[46] See A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks, 1971*, p. 12.

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that is their "closeness" to the bourgeoisie,[47] and, on the other hand, their relative "distance" from the working class.

Changes in the Position of Academics as a Social Group

It is evident, however, that important changes are taking place in each of the three areas I have discussed above.

Firstly, in many disciplines the traditional schools of interpretation are in a state of some crisis and have come under attack from a number of different directions, of which the most important is often Marxist. This is particularly true in some of the social science disciplines, for example, economics and sociology, but it also applies, usually to a lesser extent, in other subjects such as philosophy, literary criticism, law and the natural sciences.

The causes of this crisis are, of course, manifold and complex: they are, for example, at once related to developments in the "real world", developments in Marxism and "internal inconsistencies" within the traditional paradigms. The important point to note here, however, is that the implications of this crisis involve not only the more general socio-ideological role of these disciplines but also the outlook and ideology of academics themselves. The changes so far achieved, of course, are limited and vary from discipline to discipline, being more advanced in some than in others. Moreover, it would be wrong to envisage this process as either a speedy one or one which is likely to be "completed". Indeed, for the foreseeable future, large sections of academics will continue to be "wedded" in one way or another to various schools of bourgeois ideology. Nevertheless, it remains that important changes have already taken place and that a major growth in the influence of Marxism can have a major impact on the ideology of academics.

This brings me to the changes in the second and third areas, that is, the liberal university and the wage-labour situation of academics respectively. And here I will be more detailed because these questions are closely related to the main theme of the first part of the article, namely the present crisis in the university sector.

Liberal University

Firstly, the liberal university. As I argued earlier, the five essential characteristics of the liberal university are now under attack, that is: (a) the autonomy of the university sector; (b) the relatively high staff-student ratio; (c) the research time available to academics; (d) the concept of academic self-government (i.e. the trend towards bureaucratisation and authoritarianism in the university as power tends to be concentrated in the hands of the top administrators and the professoriat); and (e) the concept of an "educational" rather than "vocational" degree (though pressure here is still relatively limited).

The consequences of this attack as far as the ideology of academics is concerned must be seen in the context of the historical relationship between academics and the liberal university. As I argued earlier, most academics are not only deeply imbued with the values and principles of the liberal university but the latter, in their totality, also represent an important (if perhaps largely "unconscious") link between academics and the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the destruction or at least undermining of the characteristics of the liberal university is likely, on the one hand, to weaken the organic quality of academics as a social group, that is to weaken their bond with the bourgeoisie, and, on the other hand, to arouse the opposition of academics to such attacks.

This, of course, does *not* mean that *all* ties between the bourgeoisie and academics consequent upon the nature of the university are likely to be destroyed. In this context, it is necessary to return to the first part of the article. In it I suggested that the state's strategy is not the complete destruction of the universities as a privileged sector within higher education, but rather their retention at a relatively less (but still) privileged position. Thus, some of the points advanced in relation to the links between the bourgeoisie and academics stemming from the character of the liberal university will continue to apply in the future. Nevertheless, it remains that these links are likely to be significantly weaker for two reasons: firstly, because of the universities' relatively less privileged status (though this will vary from university to university in accord with its relative degree of privilege) and, secondly, because of the impact of the attacks on the liberal university (together with the struggle against them)[48] on the consciousness of academics.

Economic Position

This brings us to the wage-labour situation of academics. Since 1928-9, academics have experienced a *relatively* declining standard of living as measured against the average annual earnings in

[47] This is partly expressed in such ideological tendencies as "individualism", *"élitism"* and "liberalism".

[48] i.e. struggle itself will be an important determinant of the evolving consciousness of academics.

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manufacturing industries[49] and this decline has accelerated considerably in the recent period of rapid inflation. As a consequence the economic and social (e.g. areas in which they live) distance between academics and the industrial working class has narrowed considerably. Moreover, over the last year or so, the living standards of academics have been subject not only to a relative fall but also an *absolute* decline: indeed, by the end of the present academic session, academics will have suffered a very significant absolute drop in their real wages over the previous 12 months (even taking into account annual age increments).

One of the effects of this latter development is already becoming clear: academics are beginning to take a much closer interest in collective organisation and action through their union, the AUT, than has hitherto been the case.[50] This is likely to be significant in two ways: it will give academics a more trade union consciousness, which is particularly important in a profession characterised by a highly individualistic work situation (indeed, there have only been very limited changes so far in this respect[51] and it could, through the AUT, draw academics much closer to other groups of organised workers.[52] [53] [54]

The Future Direction of Academics

I have sought to analyse the position of academics as a social group and thus, by examining some of the key historical determinants of their consciousness, explain the traditional "closeness" of academics to the bourgeoisie (i.e. their organic quality) and conversely their relative "distance" from the working class. I have also sought to show how the precise character of some of those determinants is now changing in such a way as to tend to undermine both the traditional closeness of academics to the bourgeoisie and their distance from the working class.

At the same time, I have tried to indicate how this process is likely to be, firstly, a relatively protracted one and, secondly, in relation to the nature of the university and the question of ideology, an incomplete one. While, as far as their wage-labour situation is concerned, certain relative economic "privileges" (*vis-à-vis*, industrial working class) may tend to persist for some time. And their work situation is likely to remain relatively "privatised" in character for the foreseeable future.

Nevertheless, the implication of the general argument is that over the coming years we are likely to witness a major shift in the consciousness of academics as a social group. And the *potential* consequence of such a shift is a situation in which academics are transformed into a relatively progressive social force which in some measure identifies its interests with those of the working class. It must be said, however, that such a consequence is not *inevitable*. Indeed, when the objective social co-ordinates of a group like academics is subject to relatively rapid change, then both progressive and reactionary outcomes are conceivable.

In this context, the eventual result will depend upon a number of factors including the precise nature and extent of the changes outlined above and the strength of the working class (i.e. as a hegemonic force). But, not least, it will also depend upon the *Party's intervention*: indeed, its

[49] Halsey and Trow, *op. cit.*, p. 173. I have not discussed the causes of this relative decline, but they are obviously connected with the growing crisis of British capitalism (and its relative inability to "reward" certain sections of state employees, etc., in the old way), especially with the large increases in their numbers and the growing relative economic strength of the industrial working class and the causes of the acceleration in this relative decline over the past few years have largely been a function of this increased economic strength of the industrial working class and the pressure of public expenditure resulting from Britain's economic crisis.

[50] For example, academics held their first-ever industrial action on May 6 this year when the AUT organised a day of protest on salaries.

[51] The changes here have largely been confined to, for example, the growth of collective research in the natural sciences. Nevertheless, with the expansion of state-sponsored research in general (through SRC, SSRC, etc.), this trend will probably accelerate in the future. At the same time, a less "atomised" conception of teaching will also probably develop.

[52] One form this is likely to take is the affiliation of the AUT to the TUC.

[53] In this context, of course, it would be wrong to assume that trade union consciousness *per se* will automatically result in and complement a progressive political consciousness. The latter will depend not only on economic organisation but also the kind of economic organisation, wider awareness of academics, etc. Also, even a significant relative deterioration in academic salaries will still leave academics with other economic "privileges" over the industrial working class such as security, age-increments and monthly salaries which together have various ideological implications.

[54] At the same time, academics have fallen behind upper middle strata groups with whom they have traditionally associated (e.g. higher civil servants, doctors) and come much closer to other sections of the teaching profession, notably as a consequence of the Houghton award.

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intervention over time, in conjunction with that of other left forces, based on the strategic perspective of shifting academics as a group to the left, can be *decisive* in determining the precise character of the outcome.

Strategic Perspective

I now want to examine this strategic perspective, or at least certain aspects of it, in the light of the foregoing analysis.

Firstly, it must be said that while this strategic perspective is conceived of in terms of academics as a social group, this does *not* mean that *all* academics can be won for a relatively progressive stance, but rather only a majority of them. Here the earlier argument about the likely slow, uneven and incomplete nature of the changes in the determinants of the consciousness of academics is relevant; that is, for example, the argument that the change in ideology is likely to be slow, patchy and unfinished and that in respect to the nature of the university variable and partial.

Underlying these arguments is, of course, the notion that academics are a far from homogeneous group, being "divided" not only by "university" and "discipline", as suggested above, but also by other factors such as age, income and social background. The implication of these divisions is that some sections will be more difficult to win than others. Thus, with regard to the "university", Oxford and Cambridge academics, for example, will, by and large, be harder to shift *en masse* than academics at most other universities because of the relatively more privileged nature of those institutions as reflected in the work-situation, life-style, fringe-benefits, etc., of academics there.[55] Similarly, it will be more difficult to shift academics in some disciplines than in others because of the nature of those disciplines, their prevalent ideologies, etc.

Finally, a word on the age question. On the whole, it is likely to be easier to win younger than older academics because of their different periods of ideological "formation", different economic situations, etc. Indeed, it should be noted that one of the problems facing the left in the universities at the present time is the fact that, with the universities either expanding very slowly, stagnating or actually contracting over the last few years, the intake of what might be described as post-1968 recruits (i.e., of students radicalised in the late sixties) to the profession has been relatively small.[56] [57] [58]

Secondly, the strategic perspective envisages a total transformation in the political and ideological position of academics as a social group; that is, a total change in how it sees its role in society (i.e. its function, relationship to other classes, etc.). Such a change, however, *cannot* be brought about as a result of *partial* interventions —for example, on economic questions *or* on ideological questions related to the disciplines *or* on questions concerning the nature of the university. Rather, the intervention must consist of and combine all three of these elements together with discussion and action on more general political and ideological questions (e.g. developments in the working-class movement— hence raising questions of relations with that class). Only in this way can an overall change be effected in the outlook of academics. This immediately, of course, underlines the limitations of, for example, trade union organisation and activity in itself, that is its essentially partial character, and emphasises the need for and role of the party (at, for example, a branch, specialist group and NUSAC level).[59]

Thirdly, in struggling on particular issues, it is essential to relate them as far as is possible to the broader strategic perspective. This, of course, is what might be described as a well-established leninist maxim, but it seems to be particularly important to emphasise this in the case of academics precisely because of the latter's ambiguous social position and therefore potentially unstable politico-ideological outlook and direction. I want to discuss this problem in relation to a concrete issue, namely the struggle over the reorganisation of the universities.

[55] In this context, it is also important to note that the social background of Oxbridge academics tends to be more "middle and upper class", Halsey and Trow, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

[56] Halsey and Trow, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

[57] These differences, indeed, are evident now; thus a significant proportion of left academics tend to be young social scientists. See also NOP/THES poll of academic in THES, 4/10/74, p. 2.

[58] Another factor I have not considered are the various divisions between "professors", "senior lecturers", lecturers, etc.

[59] And, in that context, also the development of "broad left" groupings at a university level (apart from as well as related to activity in the AUT), Marxist discussion groups, etc.

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Defence of the University

Earlier I argued that large sections of academics (i.e. not only the left but also liberal academics) are likely to oppose the attacks that are at present being made against the university (in the five areas I outlined). That is, in the struggle to defeat the Government's attempt to reorganise the university sector in accord with a more "technocratic" conception of higher education as a whole, it should be possible to win the support of a wide cross-section of academics.

Our conception of this particular struggle should be the forging of an alliance between left and liberal (i.e. the great majority of academics) together with non-academic staff and students in the universities around the question of the defence of "educational standards" (i.e. "material" standards) in the university. This must, however, be seen as an essentially limited and defensive task and, as such, only the first stage of a longer-term strategy. The precise character of this second phase is, perhaps, difficult to predict at present, partly because still too little thought has been given to it by the left and partly because it is bound up with our whole conception of a Labour Government committed to left policies which begins to threaten the power of the monopoly bourgeoisie in *all* areas of British society, including education.[60]

Such a strategy, however, must include the following areas: (i) content of education; (ii) nature of research; (iii) socially democratising and expanding the student intake (towards a mass system of higher education); (iv) democratisation of internal structure of universities; (v) abolition of the binary system and the creation of the "comprehensive university" on the basis of "levelling up"; and (vi) the development of a democratic system of public accountability for higher education as a whole.

Because this overall transformation represents the second stage of our strategy, however, and therefore lies in the future, does not mean that it is less relevant to the present. Indeed, in this context I want to suggest that there are two particular reasons why this overall strategic perspective must be an integral part of our present interventions around the nature and defence of the university. Firstly, the defence of "educational standards" in the university cannot be successfully achieved without allies and for those allies academics must look to other sections in higher education, and in particular staff and students in the polytechnics, together with the labour movement. But the former can only be won to this demand if it is presented in the context of a new and essentially equal relationship between the university and the polytechnic (i.e. (v) above) and, similarly, the labour movement can only be won if the university is made relevant to the needs of the working class through, for example, greater possibilities of access (by expansion, positive discrimination, etc., i.e. (iii) above).

Secondly, unless this strategic perspective is injected into the struggle by left academics, then the unity achieved (between left and liberal academics) on immediate issues will not be carried over into the longer-term demands. The reason for this is that many liberal academics tend to have a primarily regressive and conservative view of the university: that is, their ideal conception of the university is, as I discussed earlier, the liberal university. As a consequence, many will tend to view the struggle to maintain "educational standards" in the university as a struggle to return to, or at least to maintain, the existence of the liberal university. Thus, unless we combine a correct tactical fight on "educational standards", together with a ceaseless struggle around our strategic conception of higher education, then the unity generated in the defensive struggle will not be carried over into the longer-term struggle for a mass, democratic system of higher education, and, at the same time, university academics will fail to win the support of other sections of staff and students in higher education and the labour movement.

Summary

I have sought to analyse what is happening and what is likely to happen to the universities in the coming period and, on that basis, examine the situation of academics. I have tried to show how that situation is already changing and how it is likely to change in the future. From this, I have argued that it is possible to speak realistically in terms of a strategic perspective which envisages a transformation in the outlook of academics from a position in which, historically, they have identified their interests with those of the bourgeoisie to a position in which they become an essentially progressive social force, closely allied with the working class.

In conclusion, it should be added that the significance for the progressive movement of such a development would far exceed the relative numerical weight of academics. For, given that the bourgeoisie's position depends crucially on its ability to exercise ideological hegemony, then the significance of a social group like academics, whose primary function is ideological, is inevitably far greater than its numbers might suggest.

[60] Which must therefore involve a dynamic conception of change (including educational change), depending on the precise nature and strength of the Labour Government, etc.

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For the Advancement of Culture

Georges Marchais and Roland Leroy

(We print below extracts made from speeches by Georges Marchais, General Secretary of the French Communist Party, and Roland Leroy, of the Political Bureau of the Party, on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of La Nouvelle Critique, *monthly journal of the French Communist Party. The speeches have been translated by Noel Burch and Jon Chadwick.)*

GEORGES MARCHAIS

The Alliance of the Working Class and the Intellectuals

The broad majority grouping for which we are fighting is not only necessary but possible, because those who suffer in the present situation and whose interests lie in fundamental transformation of the economic, social and political life of this country are today in a majority.

And within this context, as our party has already stated, we attach major, that is to say, decisive importance, to the achievement of an alliance of the working class and the intellectuals.

The working class, whose number and role in national life have grown in recent years, and whom we do not regard as consisting solely of manual workers—anyone who reads our literature knows this perfectly well—the working class is the class which is most directly affected by capitalist exploitation and has the greatest interest in carrying to a successful conclusion the struggle for the emancipation of our society.

However, one of the essential characteristics of the present period is the growth of the part played by intellectual labour in general social activity and of the importance of intellectuals in our country. At the same time, and precisely because of their increased role, the present system exploits and oppresses intellectuals more than ever, attacks the material conditions of their existence, impedes any possibility of their development and mutilates or perverts their creative activity.

This is why the alliance of the working class and the intellectuals—which has for many years been a consistent factor in the work of our party—has become, in our view, a matter of major importance. Its achievement and its development constitute one of the essential factors in the success of our people's struggle for democracy and socialism.

We do not propose a subordinate role for intellectuals within this alliance. There is nothing administrative or hierarchical about our conception of the relations between workers and democratic and revolutionary intellectuals. It is aimed at establishing loyal relations of fraternal solidarity in the common struggle.

Nor do we ask intellectuals to give up being themselves or to abandon their own aspirations in the alliance with the working class. On the contrary, this alliance would lose its essential substance if intellectuals did not bring to it their own specific qualities; in other words, if they did not play in it the irreplaceable role which is theirs. And for this reason they must, and will, find the means to achieve their own material and moral aspirations, for these in no way contradict those of the working class.

ROLAND LEROY

Cultural Policy an Integral Part of Overall Policy

For the Communist Party, cultural policy is not an ornament, it is not a balm to soothe the woes of life, a moment of forgetfulness, of diversion, for the communion of souls, to which it has been reduced with hateful cynicism in an interview with *Le Monde*,[1] or an article in *Revue des Deux Mondes*[2] by a Minister or by the President of the Republic himself.[3] For the Communist Party policy is not something which can be cut up into little pieces. Cultural policy is as important as economic or social policy, and this is true for reasons having to do with the very nature of social life.

Though too often reduced, by narrow thinking, to the sole domain of literature and the arts, culture is in fact rooted in social activity as a whole as may be observed from the complex correspondences between general historical development and literary and artistic development. Moreover, culture also includes science, technology, professional activity and physical activity; it is an integral part of the relationships which grow up between people at every moment

[1] *Le Monde:* newspaper, influential amongst intellectuals, hostile to M. Pompidou's régime.

[2] *Revue des Deux Mondes*—old-fashioned, ultra-conservative literary review.

[3] At the time, M. Pompidou.

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of their lives. In a class society in which all these relationships are governed, in the last instance, by exploitation, culture cannot fail to suffer the consequences of exploitation, cannot fail to be orientated and characterised by it.

It is, consequently, in the very nature of the Communist Party, the revolutionary party of the revolutionary class, to struggle in every domain to free all social relations from the degradation and mutilation which arises from exploitation.

Today the degradation and mutilation are such that ours is to be the period of the transference of national responsibility from one class to another, during which the prospect of the working class taking charge of France's advancement towards socialism and Communism is historically near.

Everything Calls for an Extraordinary Cultural Development

Considering the revolution that is taking place in the forces of production, in the knowledge of nature and of society, everything in society today calls for an unprecedented broadening of the horizons of each and every worker, each and every citizen, a socialisation and generalisation of their relationships. Hence everything calls for an extraordinary cultural development and confirms this admirable analysis by Marx:

> "In accord with this tendency, capital drives beyond national barriers and prejudices as much as beyond nature worship, as well as all traditional, confined, complacent, encrusted satisfactions of present needs and reproductions of old ways of life. It is destructive toward all of this, and constantly revolutionises it, tearing down all the barriers which hem in the development of the forces of production, the expansion of needs, the all-sided development of production and the exploitation and exchange of natural and mental forces.
>
> "But from the fact that capital posits every such limit as a barrier and hence gets ideally beyond it, it does not by any means follow that it has really overcome it, and, since every such barrier contradicts its character, its production moves in contradictions which are constantly overcome but just as constantly reborn. Furthermore, the universality towards which it irresistibly strives encounters barriers in its own nature, which will, at a certain stage of its development, allow it to be recognised as being itself the greatest barrier to this tendency, and hence will drive towards its own abolition."[4]

[4] Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, p. 313, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1953. English translation Martin Nicolaus, Penguin Books, p. 410.

An Absolute Crisis in Cultural Development

The crisis of our society is born precisely of the barriers placed on the technical and social revolution by an outdated social system. In the domain of culture the crisis takes the form of an extremely harmful malthusianism. . . .[5]

There is not a single sign which can be said to deny the existence of this crisis in the development of culture, a crisis which is no longer merely relative but really absolute—even the few pilot projects, whose number is anyway getting less and less, have all been steeped in big business manoeuvres and have had their cultural aims perverted before they have even seen the light of day. . . .

In these conditions of crisis, capital, which Marx described in the previously quoted text as driving beyond prejudices, nature worship and old ways of life, completely repudiates rationalism and optimism. Its ideologies, and even its most responsible political leaders, cultivate the denigration of science, education, culture and reason, of intellectuals and of any or every scientific concept. They develop cataclysmic ideologies and ethics which mingle senility and suicidal tendencies, backward-looking nostalgia and utopian dreams which are not the signs they once were of bold research but symptoms of a frightened flight from the world in which revolutionaries raise their accusing voices.

Authoritarianism a Necessity for Big Business

Of course, the ruling class is particularly aggressive towards those intellectuals who criticise them directly. But in point of fact, all men and women of culture, if they refuse to be accomplices of this régime, and all cultural activities, if they refuse to repudiate their true vocation, constitute an obstacle in the way of big business and are regarded by the ruling class as so many "Molotov cocktails". . . .

This is the logic of a system which in fact prevents itself from ever finding the degree of servility it would like from its personnel. It is the logic of the system which has led to a generalisation of censorship and self-censorship and to the generalisation of political, judiciary and police attacks against freedom of expression or creation, in conditions which may at first sight appear absurd from the point of view of the powers that be themselves. . . . And it is true that "Histoire d'A.",[6] a film by Arrabal, or *Le Canard Enchaîné*[7] do not directly threaten the régime,

[5] . . . signifies sections omitted.

[6] "Histoire d'A.", film advocating the legislation of abortion.

[7] *Le Canard Enchaîné*—old-style satirical magazine with libertarian tendencies.

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but the crisis in society is such that everything is inter-related and such that the powers that be are led to be wary of anything that is not absolute servility and straight conformism. This is a sign of fundamental weakness, but at the same time it harbours the risks of political and ideological intimidation and interference.

The ruling class is no longer capable of constructing comprehensive ideological systems. Pushed on to the defensive, they strive to pervert and hinder the growing consciousness of the crisis by sewing the seeds of doubt and guilt and even, in the last resort, by encouraging nihilistic revolt. Just as the coming generations of young people are likely to receive increasingly inappropriate training; just as capitalist anarchy is accelerating waste, regional imbalances and absurd town-planning, reversible only at the price of immense effort, so too the ruling class in decay carries a heavy responsibility for these attempts to pervert social consciousness. It is urgent to put an end to this régime. It is high time to set France on the road to socialism, through the indispensable transitional stage of advanced democracy.[8]

It is urgent that the development of culture be set back on its feet, that it be in keeping with the possibilities opened up by the development of knowledge, with the needs of the masses and with the interests of the nation. This was the idea expressed in a similar spirit by a scientist and a poet. As Frederic Joliot Curie put it: "What magnificent constructions, what extraordinary works of art could be produced using modern techniques if we could only agree to work not only for our own use but for that of future generations." And as Paul Eluard wrote: "We have entered the fire, it must be for our own well-being."

A Distinct but Fundamentally Convergent Role

This is the ground on which the mass of intellectuals and the working class form their alliance. Both, indeed the nation as a whole, need an unprecedented development of culture. Yes, the control of nature and society through scientific and technological intervention, through artistic creation, through the projection of the imagination, must become everybody's concern. Yes, Marx, Einstein, Freud, Picasso, Brecht and many others have shown the way. Men and women can discover, behind appearances, custom, established order, so-called naturalness, the reasons for revolutionary transformation and the ways in which to accomplish it.

For what is still a long historical period to come, the roles of the working class and the intellectuals in the revolutionary effort will be distinct but fundamentally convergent. We believe it to be to our party's credit that we have done away with "workerist" conceptions, aristocratic approaches and various other confusions, and gradually defined the objective concrete conditions for an alliance of the working class and the intellectuals, through the recognition of their respective roles in the process of production, their situation with regard to class relationships, and the precise modalities of their social activities. Among intellectuals it is the engineers and the technicians, situated like the working class, at the very heart of capitalist production, who are most likely to directly perceive its nature, to fight waste, managerial red-tape and authoritarianism, and to fully play their role in the struggle for the development of the forces of production.

We believe it is to our party's credit to have constantly proposed as the content of this alliance that which has been conceived to be the stage in the progress towards socialism according to the development of the forces of production and the level reached by the class struggle. This was our party's position when it invited participation in the pre-war anti-fascist front, and in the national democratic front during the resistance, the liberation and the cold war. This was the position of our party when, under the leadership in this area of Laurent Casanova, it undertook to provide the means of development and organisation for the moves towards the alliance of the intellectuals and the working class.

The character, necessity and possibilities of achieving a political alliance between the great mass of intellectuals and the working class have evolved considerably, at the same time as the number and decisive role of the working class has increased and the role, importance and number of intellectuals has grown. At the same time, the harmful effects of capitalist exploitation have spread to the great mass of intellectuals. In 1968, Waldeck Rochet made it clear that we considered this alliance to be one of the keys to the future of the democratic revolutionary movement. Every day this receives further confirmation during this period of rallying the political and social forces indispensable to the building of the majority which will make it possible to defeat the ruling class and their régime.

In the Interests of Intellectuals to Build a Socialist France

How do we find the line which defines the forces that favour progress and those that are hostile to it? Where else but in the situation described by Georges Marchais in his book, *The*

[8] Advanced democracy: a stage envisaged on the road to socialism.

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Democratic Challenge: "In France today there are those people who produce social wealth and those who profit by it. They are not the same people."

The outlines and objectives of this alliance are today both broader and more precise. It is true that a handful of intellectuals consciously serve, defend and celebrate the interests of the ruling class and their régime. It is in the interests of the others, all the others—and this we emphasise strongly—that a great democratic movement should triumph in this country, that socialism should be constructed in France. And this is so for reasons which are material, intellectual and ethical. The vast majority of intellectuals are now wage-earners, who like any other worker can only live by selling their labour power. They, too, have daily experience of misemployment of skilled qualifications and the need for extended training; they, too, are subject to heavy taxation, housing and transport problems, and the decline in the quality of life. Intellectuals who follow the so-called "liberal" professions often have their "liberty" severely curtailed by the banks and business groups. And also their actual development of their profession, their work, their discipline or their science requires profound transformations of the society as a whole.

The increasing division of labour is a matter of fact in most intellectual activities—scientific, technical, medical, juridical social or artistic. The need for what is known as multi-disciplinary work—broad, flexible training programmes allowing for frequent readaptations and an understanding of the basic concepts of other fields of knowledge—the need for the constitution of teams; the need for the use of the means of making it possible to dispense with archaic and tiresome procedures, are needs that are felt by all. A régime based on profit, on the other hand, provides "answers" based on departmentalisation, skimpier education and training, immediate profit-earning capacity, stinginess, an increased *social* division of labour, whereas the necessary *technical* division of labour should go hand in hand with the socialisation of control over the whole process of research, development and application.

From this point of view intellectuals, like other categories of workers, have an understanding which is no less essential for all its specificity. So the demands of the masses to live better and differently converge with the intellectuals' demands to work better and differently. The struggles for housing, medical care, town planning, education, improvements in working conditions and the general quality of life offer immense perspectives for the activities of the intellectual worker. This is why we have so often said that the Common Programme of Government provides an answer to these struggles and is, taken as a whole, in favour of culture, in favour of intellectuals. For, in our view, as Georges Marchais puts it in *The Democratic Challenge*: "Production, science, technology, are not ends in themselves. They are meaningful only when they serve men and women and promote the development of all their faculties. Moreover, it is this human development which can provide the only key to the development of production and technology."

A Hitherto Unknown Freedom of Creation

This is why we say that the application of the Common Programme of Government would give intellectuals a hitherto unknown freedom of creation. A democratic France will, by its very nature, require that intellectuals devote all their capacities for invention and discovery to answering the question which will rise up from all directions: how can the needs of the people be satisfied?—whereas today doctors are asked not to give too much medical care, town-planners not to spend too much time conceiving new environments, engineers not to develop plans which go beyond the financial limitations of whatever company.

Today, we cannot sound the alarm too loudly —French science is in danger! The percentage of the Gross National Product devoted to scientific research is not only less than what it is in the Soviet Union; it is less than that of any other developed capitalist country! However, we must insist that these fetters placed on the development of science are not simply a blow at the way we live today; they compromise the overall development of our society, since science is becoming an increasingly indispensable factor of that development. This malthusianism takes a heavy toll of national independence, of social and economic development, of schooling and of the freedom of research as well as of its very content.

Anti-scientific nihilism and pessimism have fostered a malthusianism which is all the more destructive in this initial period of a new scientific and technological revolution. The prospect of a huge transformation of the very nature of work is being sacrificed.

Socialism

All the more reason why socialism, which requires a high level of development within the forces of production and a high level of social application, would be able to fully develop the potential which would be brought to light in a

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democratic France. Those countries which are building socialism provide a good example of this. Thus, in all socialist countries, teachers, educationalists and psychologists are encouraged to find ways and means of raising the school-leaving age to 18 for the entire population and of ensuring permanent educational facilities for adults. Anti-Soviet propaganda will no doubt label this encouragement as coercion. I believe that if our intellectuals were familiar with that situation they would call it freedom.

To take another example, every scientist and social scientist in the Soviet Union is invited to participate in the elaboration of a prospective plan for national development extending into the 1990s, a plan which calls for an unprecedented mastery of the harsh, Soviet soil and the gradual elimination of the differences in the social, technical and cultural levels of the peasants on the one hand and the urban workers on the other. Anti-Sovietism will no doubt call this invitation coercion. I believe our intellectuals would call it freedom, and this is how Soviet intellectuals look upon it.

Naturally enough, in the course of this research which is an integral part of developed socialism, a whole host of ideas and concepts emerge and their diversity amazes anyone who takes the trouble to be informed and explodes the dark legend of anti-Soviet, anti-Communist propaganda regarding the alleged totalitarian uniformity of thought in the socialist countries.

One of the prime objectives of the alliance of the working class and the other strata of workers, among whom are the intellectuals, is to embark upon the road towards a socialism whose material base will be well developed from the very start; an essential factor which justifies the assertion of our party that in France socialism will take on an original appearance and form.

The Content of a Cultural Revolution

This factor constitutes the substructure of the cultural revolution of which France stands so sorely in need and towards which so many intellectuals already more or less clearly aspire. If I may be allowed to quote what I have written elsewhere:[9]

> "The socialist revolution is not merely the sum of an economic revolution, a political and social revolution and an ideological revolution, the revolution in each of these sectors becoming, according to the specific time and place, determinant. Rather is it a single process whose different components do not develop at the same rate but whose motive force is located, in the last instance, in the revolution of production relationships on the basis of the development of the forces of production which objectively leads to the broadest socialisation of production. There is no such thing as a purely cultural revolution, no more than there can be a revolution which begins by a cultural revolution. Ideology and culture are rooted in the whole of social life, they are born there. A revolution in production relationships is not a sufficient condition for a revolution in ideology and culture, but it is a necessary one, for otherwise no cultural revolution can be anything more than a dream or a game."

Let us try to define the content of this cultural revolution achieved by socialism.

The cultural revolution liberates the faculties of all workers and, thereby, of the nation as a whole. It makes possible and stimulates the access of the working classes and the masses in general to the various components of culture. It continually extends the recruitment of intellectuals to ever-increasing sections of society. It undertakes to free social relationships from the division between manual and mental labour.

From this point of view, are we sufficiently aware of the fact that the workers of the socialist countries receive additional wage bonuses if they participate in the cultural activities of their enterprise or if they follow adult education classes? Or that since 1972 workers in the German Democratic Republic are given various incentives to invent ways and means of improving the environment of their work, of their enterprise as a whole, of their town, the region or the nation? Or that the educational systems in the socialist countries have demonstrated practically that any child can, according to his or her aptitudes, find access to higher education? Are we sufficiently familiar with the extraordinary improvements in the quality of leisure time that has been achieved in the socialist countries?

The socialist cultural revolution is also the emancipation of society as a whole through a generalisation of a scientific conceptualisation and approach to all areas and through the will to promote in all men and women a social consciousness; that is, an overall awareness of the movements of nature and society. The cultural crisis in capitalist society has resulted specifically in the sterilisation of those currents which, at the beginning of the century, were able to fertilise literary and artistic imagination by an understanding of, or at least a "feeling" for the most modern movements in science and technology. While novelists drew upon the discoveries of psychology, Apollinaire and Léger brought machines and tools into their art, while the Surrealists were sensitive to the poetry of the

[9] *La Culture au Présent*, by Roland Leroy, Editions Sociales.

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modern city as in Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris*. Picasso's quest was in accord with the rhythms of our time when he invented, in the context of his work, new artistic means of measuring time and space. So there was a time in this country when modern culture was being created as both a break with, and a continuation of, former traditions, those of the renaissance, of the Encyclopedists and of Victor Hugo.

Cultural creation draws upon modern techniques, which also often provide it with means for wider dissemination. At the same time in history, Lenin, on the one hand and the Surrealists on the other, grasped the importance of cinema. Today we could say the same of television.

Bourgeois ideology, on the contrary, is today only capable of turning the clock back or of abandoning itself to passing fashions. It goes so far as to bastardise itself with a ludicrous neo-Rousseauist "back-to-nature" movement or a flight into some mythical orient. Incapable of producing any great systems of thought, whether apologetic or critical of the present régime, it casts doubts on the need for any overall world-view, of any philosophy at all.

The Need for Genuine Philosophical Work

It is important that Marxists do not accede to pressure and that they work in a creative way within the field of philosophy. This implies the need for genuine philosophical work which is both fundamental and creative in its principles and its development, philosophical work which opposes both the notion which pretends that Marx, Engels and Lenin never existed and that everything has to be discovered from scratch, and also the notion which pretends that nothing has happened in the world since the era of Marx, Engels and Lenin and that everything has already been said. Communists, for their part, will never give up their effort to develop the revolutionary movement on the basis of scientific theory and practice. Such a theory and practice has made it possible for the working-class movement to gradually disengage itself from the domination of bourgeois ideology, to leave behind short-sighted opportunism and to conceive with ever-increasing clarity the general laws of capitalism and socialism. Of course, the scientific attitude is fundamentally different from the scientism with which some try to identify it; it is open, ever-developing, never finished, it is the contrary of dogmatism, it lays no prohibitions on initiative and imagination. There is such a thing as a scientific imagination and in the context of the reality of their time Marx, Engels and Lenin amply proved this.

The cultural revolution is ultimately the recognition of the real relationships between intellectual activities and the whole of social movement, between the revolutionary movement and the development of culture. These relationships are never immediate, transparent or mechanical. Intellectual activity interprets, and sometimes, in specific ways, at its own rhythm and with its own methods and laws, anticipates productive activities and social and political struggles. In this essential unevenness of development are found the conditions for the actual possibility of intellectual, scientific or artistic creation. It is of prime importance, in order for the social revolutionary movement and the cultural movement ultimately to progress together in historical time, that this variation be taken into account on both sides and that there be an awareness that it is indeed a variation, not some soaring flight into the clouds of idealism nor a narrow stick-in-the-mud view of the economic and political.

The French Communist Party has tenaciously striven in the midst of experiments and errors to implement a theoretically well-grounded cultural policy which would prove itself in practice. We have publicly acknowledged our errors, but we are not prepared to write off our efforts. It is sometimes said that it is possible to be a Communist intellectual provided one never re-reads what one once wrote, or what the party used to write, about intellectuals and culture. Well, we believe, on the contrary, that it is very useful to measure the distance that has been covered and to make an appraisal of each step. It is surprising to see that the party is today often asked to return to conceptions such as eclecticism or the subordination of culture to politics, the harmfulness of which the party has grasped in such a way that it has no wish to give in on this point.

We reject eclecticism, our attitude consists, as Lenin's did, in stressing the fact that literature and art cannot rest on positions of indifferent neutrality with regard to the great class struggle between antagonistic forces being waged in every country in the world. At the same time, we are also faithful to Lenin when he wrote:

> "There is no question that literature is least of all subject to mechanical adjustment or levelling, to the rule of the majority over the minority. There is no question either that in this field greater scope must undoubtedly be allowed for personal initiative, individual inclination, thought and fantasy, form and content." (Lenin on *Party Organisation and Party Literature*.)[10]

[10] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 46.

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An Aspiration which Calls for Changes in Culture and Society

We can see that these past few years have been marked by a widespread aspiration for this cultural revolution amongst intellectuals, especially amongst young intellectuals, whatever their illusions as to the possibilities of achieving it under the rule of big business. There exists an aspiration towards collective work, a superseding of the concept of the intellectual seen as a hero or a solitary craftsman: there are attempts to set up research teams, education teams, specialist groups of various kinds, theatrical companies which constitute a collective director.

There are tendencies to break the partitioning between the literary and artistic disciplines, and between these and scientific disciplines: there are attempts, for example, to associate verbal, visual and musical expression, music and mathematics. There is a drive to situate intellectual activities within society, with respect to the movement of the masses, as witnessed in the activities of what is called Le Jeune Théâtre (the new theatre). There is a drive to re-assimilate the national and international cultural heritage in order to confront it with the present and make it more fertile by doing so. All of this is being carried out at the expense of an immense amount of work and is hampered by enormous difficulties. . . .

We are dealing with an emerging phenomenon which makes compelling demands and which calls for changes in culture and in society, precisely because what is at stake is an aspiration which is neither aristocratic nor populist, neither formalist nor spontaneous.

The Validity of Marxism-Leninism

We could find examples in every area of science, technology, literature and art. It is life itself which is beginning to solve the real questions, but only yesterday the terms of those questions were artificially distorted either by abusively assimilating or mechanically opposing one to another: for example, the question of tradition and contemporary culture, the question of the cultural vanguard and the socio-political vanguard, the question of the public and the non-public, the question of conscious work and spontaneity. We feel justified in thinking that Communist intellectuals and their party have had a share in this evolution.

We feel that this is one proof of the capacity of Marxism-Leninism to deal with questions of culture and the cultural revolution, one basis for the increasing influence of Marxism-Leninism among intellectuals, one reason for the increasing influence of the Communist Party among their number. In fact intellectuals are in a position to know from experience how falsified was the picture of Marxism and of the Communist Party that has been presented to them for so long.

Today they know from experience both Marxism's capacity to accommodate the questions, procedures and discoveries of all the sciences as well as other conceptions of the world and also its capacity to steadfastly maintain its own principles, dialectical and historical materialism and its practical link with the international workers' movement. For example, in dealing with cultural questions, Marxism-Leninism rejects any notion of a science, an art or a literature which are, in and for themselves, bourgeois or proletarian. It asserts that research and creation are by their very nature contradictory with the dominant classes' attempt to arrest the movement of history at the stage of a class society. But it also observes that culture is not protected from class struggle, that class struggle cuts across culture, that the dominant classes can permeate it with their ideology, turn it to their own interests and thereby lead it to its decay. That is why Marxism-Leninism will always reject any compromise which tends to weaken or deny the essential characteristics of the cultural revolution. This was the sense of our party's appeal addressed to intellectuals in the resolution drawn up by the Central Committee at Argenteuil:[11]

> "The development of science requires discussion and research. The Communist Party must in no way thwart these discussions nor bring forth any *a priori* truths, let alone dogmatically cut short unfinished debates among specialists. Nor can artistic creation be developed without experimentation, without various trends, various schools and the confrontation between them. The party appreciates and supports the various forms of contribution which artists make to human progress in the free development of their imagination, their taste and originality. It hopes that they will understand and support the ideological and political position of the working class."

The Need for a Communist Party

Needless to say, in this area, as in others, this understanding of the positions of the working class cannot come from a simple effort of will on the part of intellectuals nor from an administrative decision by the party, but from a conviction born of the experience of intellectuals themselves. And today that experience is becoming increasingly immediate as a result of the crisis of monopoly capitalist society.

This is why the ideologists of big business have

[11] Central Committee meeting at Argentueil.

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stepped up their anti-Marxism, anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism; these form the political offensive absolutely necessary for a class which is hard-pressed which is characterised by the passing over in silence, or the systematic falsification of Marxism, of the realities of the socialist countries, and the positions of the Communist Party. We do not confuse ruling-class anti-Marxism, anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism with the often very critical questions which intellectuals and many other people in France raise regarding Marxism, the socialist countries and the party with a view to learning more about them and to better committing themselves to the struggle for democracy and socialism.

We have often had occasion to say that the alliance of the working class and the intellectuals is not to be confused with the issue of intellectuals actually joining the party. Anti-Communism deliberately obscures this issue because it fears both. But it is also true that there is not an unbridgeable gap between the one and the other.

How could our party not wish for intellectuals to join it? As the party of the working class, as a revolutionary party which bases its practice on Marxism-Leninism and a lucid analysis of social development, it needs the qualifications which intellectuals have. In return, intellectuals will find the possibility of making the most effective contribution to the struggle for a new society and share in the experience of the working class.

The activity of Communist intellectuals, the diversity and richness of their individual and collective work, the part they play in the struggles of intellectuals, their role in the overall activities of the party, in the development and implementation of its policies are evidence of the fact that the Communist Party wants nothing to do with any notion of the subordination of intellectuals.

Through its important contribution to the development and dissemination of the cultural policies of a democratic and, ultimately, socialist France, *La Nouvelle Critique* has already helped many intellectuals to become aware of the need for a transformation of society. But the cultural problem, like all other problems which face our country, has no durable and far-reaching solution until there is a change in the structures of society. Nonetheless, at the present time, the most urgent problems of cultural development and the intellectual worker must find immediate solutions which can be imposed upon the government through the struggle of intellectuals united with other workers. This is the case with the demand to raise the budget of the Ministry for Cultural Affairs to 1 per cent of the national budget, and to increase the investments in scientific research. This is the case with the struggle against the attacks on our democratic rights; it is the case with all our immediate demands. The general struggle is made up of particular struggles and is carried out on all fronts.

In this struggle, the intellectuals have at their disposal the party's press: first and foremost, *l'Humanité*, then *Humanité Dimanche, France Nouvelle, Cahiers du Communisme, l'Ecole et la Nation, Economie et Politique* and the journal which is specifically theirs—*La Nouvelle Critique*.

By opening its pages to discussion, by clearly expressing our positions on all problems, *La Nouvelle Critique* will play its role in this struggle through which Communists seek to resolve today's problems and prepare for the changes to come. The following passage from *The Democratic Challenge* holds as true for intellectuals as it does for other strata of the population:

> "We do not want to rush things or people. Anyway, from an historical viewpoint this is quite impossible. When certain people tried, it was not without doing harm to the very cause which they wished to serve. We live in tune with our country, at the rhythm of our people's heartbeat, taking care to advance one step ahead, opening the way but not forcing the pace. Certain people grow impatient at seeing the road meet with obstacles and take roundabout routes and detours. If one looks at things with a bit of detachment, however, one can see that the horizon is growing lighter and nearer. This is perhaps what is most new; the world can move forward a little faster, a little more securely."[12]

And I will add one word to that—who in the world today can deny the role of intellectuals in the revolutionary movement when it was the death of a poet—one of the world's greatest poets—which touched off the first demonstration of the Chilean people's struggle against their torturers.

Yes—this is the full meaning of our struggle—culture, social progress, democracy, socialism are advancing through history in close formation.

[12] *Le Défi Democratique*, pp. 243-4.

VICTORY IN VIETNAM

The Struggle and its Lessons

by John Gollan

A new Communist Party Pamphlet

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Review Article:

Big Business in Britain [1]

Jack Cohen

For Marxists concepts of growth in size and scale of capitalist enterprise, of the accumulation of capital, of expanded reproduction which leads to the concentration and centralisation of capital, are both basic and familiar. They are amongst the first principles learned by all students of Marxist political economy, emphasising the dynamic, turbulent and contradictory character of capitalist production.

They are also, of course, fundamental to the concept of monopoly capitalism/imperialism, whose economic features and political significance for the struggle for socialism were outlined by Lenin in his famous book, *Imperialism,* written in 1916.

Marxists, then, are especially interested in research and writings which deal with these sides of the development of the capitalist economy, particularly if the treatment is concrete, relatively up to date and illuminates developments in our country.

This being so, *Big Business* should find many readers from amongst those of this journal for it certainly fulfils all the above mentioned provisos.

This book may be read at two different levels. On the one hand, economics students and professional economists will find it of great value as undoubtedly an important, new academic contribution to the study of oligopoly and its development in Britain since World War II, as well as a comprehensive and polemical critique of various current theories of monopoly and competition. The text throughout is illustrated by tables, charts, equations, algebraical and econometric formulae—all the sophisticated aids now usual in academic economic exposition.

On the other hand, it may also be read by the interested layman for the authors always explain both the areas of argument to be covered in each chapter and (obligingly) summarise the meanings of most of the different charts and tables as well as outlining their own conclusions. Thus while the book is not easy reading (which book about economic theory is?) the average reader is helped to follow the argument as it develops even if he or she may not fully grasp all the technicalities of the exposition.

The general reader is also helped by the rigorousness of the authors' approach. No economic category, the meaning of which is usually taken for granted, such as "growth", "the firm", "competition", "oligopoly", "rationalisation", "technical progress", "merger", "economic power", is taken at its face value. All are analysed and the sense attributed to them by the authors clearly outlined.

Critique of Neo-Classical and Orthodox Theory

The aims of the two authors are not merely to analyse and describe the development of mergers and concentration in Britain—although they do this in very great detail—but to develop a theory which explains both these and the development of Britain as a country with "an economic structure which is oligopolistic as a whole".

To do this they have to "settle accounts" with a number of orthodox economic theories which advance variants of competition theory to explain these developments. This is all the more necessary since their basic approach is that mergers and concentration arise from accumulation in conditions of competition and the action by firms to limit competition and prevent the entry of potential rivals into particular spheres of production and their markets.

The two chapters which make up part I of this book (there are four parts containing 12 chapters in all) set the framework for the whole. Chapter I contains the authors' formidable critique of such neo-classical and orthodox theories as "perfect competition, equilibrium and monopoly"; "structure-conduct-performance"; "workable competition" and "monopolistic competition". Chapter II begins the elaboration of their own alternative theory with a discussion of the capitalist firm, profits and rivalry.

Perfect competition, they say, pre-supposes "an industry with numerous firms producing a . . . homogeneous product, with each firm having a

[1] Sam Aaronovitch and Malcolm C. Sawyer—*Big Business: Concentration and Mergers in the United Kingdom: Some Empirical and Theoretical Aspects,* Macmillan, £10.

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negligible influence over the price of its output, described as each firm being a price-taker" (i.e. having to accept the market price). They add that such a theory "only really pertains to long-run equilibrium situations" but "in equilibrium rivalry ceases, for each firm is assumed [to be] content with the way things are, consequently, the model of perfect competition is not able to explain how oligopoly (i.e. domination of an industry or its markets by a few big firms) arises, or how an industry of many firms changes into one dominated by a few. . . .")

Monopoly theory assumes that monopolies "just happen and no clues are given as to the circumstances in which it is likely to appear, or to those under which it is likely to collapse". *Structure-conduct-performance* theory tends to ignore the central figure—"the firm"—by which is meant that the importance of the *interaction* of the conduct of firms on one another (i.e. the rivalry and struggle for markets) is overlooked with the result that, as in the theory of perfect competition, "oligopoly just happens with the present industrial structure having come from nowhere. . . . All these theories (including those of 'workable' and 'monopolistic' competition) indicate that the present industrial structure is stable in that there is no indication of forces which could cause the structure to change".

Chapter II defines the capitalist firm as "agent in a system whose characteristic has been unceasing growth and revolutionary change in methods of production". In a valuable thumbnail sketch of the Marxist theory of surplus value —the source of accumulation—the authors' say "no productive power is attributed to ownership of capital. . . . capitalism thus presents itself from the beginning as one of dynamic accumulation. Firms appear as the specific form of privately owned capital each engaged in the business of expanding reproduction".

Profit and Rivalry

Profit is central to the operations of the capitalist firms. It arises from the need for survival and economic growth derived from profits. However, each firm's position is affected and changed by the activity, that is, the competition, of other firms. "High profits will give rise to great accumulation. . . . This is essentially a process by which capital concentration and centralisation is carried on. . . ."

The authors stress that the pursuit of profits and growth must inevitably lead to rivalry, and this is a point central to their whole approach.

> "The market and potential profits are limited in size and as each firm seeks more profit and greater market share, it comes into conflict with other firms. But this rivalry itself threatens the growth of specific firms and therefore it becomes a major objective to abolish or reduce rivalries by mergers or agreements (or, of course, some other way of eliminating the rival)."

Having thus cleared the ground and begun to sketch out their own general approach, the authors turn to an analysis of the development of concentration in British industry and the role and extent of mergers. After an initial and frequently highly technical discussion of problems related to how concentration is to be measured, concentration in British manufacturing and non-manufacturing industry is examined. The measure of concentration mainly used by the authors is the percentage share of the biggest firms—generally the biggest four or five—of such variables as employment, assets and sales.

Growth of Concentration

From a mass of tables and statistics the following facts and figures, which do not cover all the data given by any means, are taken. In manufacturing—taking a wide spread of industries in 1968, covering 73.4 per cent of the total sales—where the five firm concentration was less than 30 per cent, they accounted for 16.1 per cent of the sales; where they were between 50-70 per cent they account for 31.5 per cent of sales, leaving 48.8 per cent of sales in the control of a few firms. This last figure represents a situation of tight oligopoly.

Hansard in 1970 reported that there are at least 156 commodities in which half the market is controlled by one firm, and this is probably an underestimation.

In non-manufacturing, e.g. in service industries, two companies own cinemas which had 44 per cent of the seating capacity. The largest four advertising agencies accounted for 28 per cent of the activity of the largest 50 in 1972, and eight such firms accounted for half the turnover. As early as 1967 the ten largest firms in television rentals accounted for 80 per cent of the business. In the same year four organisations in milk distribution accounted for nearly 70 per cent of the off-farm sales. In Scotland eight firms take more than 70 per cent. In 1965 the six largest breweries controlled 56 per cent of the public houses in Great Britain. There have been further mergers since then, increasing this proportion.

In 1964 five petrol distributors owned 13 per cent of the petrol stations which accounted for 23 per cent of the sales. This figure has certainly been exceeded since. In 1960 the five biggest building societies controlled 45.3 per cent of the funds and the ten largest 56.9 per cent. In 1970

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the corresponding figures were 50.1 per cent and 64.3 per cent.

In banking there are now six clearing banks with the four largest accounting for 91.7 per cent of the total deposits.

Such facts confirm the conclusion ". . . that with some exceptions concentration in British industry has increased sharply since the war".

Mergers are, of course, a cardinal element in concentration and they assume different forms. They are defined as meaning "transfers of control or poolings of control which result from formal changes in majority holdings of equity of the firms concerned". Control is assumed to be a function of ownership. Mergers can take the form of either fusions of different firms or acquisition of one firm, or firms, by others. The dominant form assumed by mergers in Britain since 1955 has been acquisitions, although there have been important mergers in some industries in the form of fusions.

Three Merger Waves

There have been three waves of merger activity in Britain—that between 1888-9 and 1910 reaching its high peak between 1889 and 1902; that between 1919 and 1930 with high peaks in 1919-21; and that from 1952 to the present time "with merger activity tending to rise throughout the period and with marked rises in 1959 and with peaks in 1967-68 and 1972".

Some idea of the scope and increasing tempo of merger activity can be gauged from the following table:

Expenditure on acquiring subsidiaries as percentage of fixed assets (manufacturing and distribution) 1949-72 (annual average)

1949-52	11.1
1954-58	14.7
1959-63	30.9
1964-68	46.9
1969-72	54.2

And the figures for expenditure on acquiring subsidiaries as a percentage of the total uses of funds, for the same periods (annual averages) in manufacturing and distribution were 5.2; 8.3; 15.1; 21.3 and 14.6.

The total number of firms acquired in manufacturing in 1955 was 196 with assets of £60.8 million for an outlay of £66.5 million. In 1968 the number of firms acquired had risen to 627 with assets acquired amounting to £780.4 million for an outlay of £1,529.8 million, while in 1972, 576 firms were acquired for an outlay of £1,292.2 million.

There has been an increasing process of mergers and concentration in banks, financial houses, property companies, insurance companies, investment and unit trusts and this has enabled them to play a growing part in developing mergers in industry and distribution.

The large scale disappearance of firms as the result of acquisitions is the "prime cause of increasing concentration".

Capitalism develops through small scale production and competition to oligopoly as "an irreversible stage" of the economic structure, to the point where the whole economic system in Britain can now be defined as oligopolistic.

Managerial Capitalism

The reasons for this development and of its concomitant, that of mergers and takeovers, have, of course, given rise to a great variety of theories—those emphasising differences of interest between managers and shareholders; valuation ratios; price earnings ratios; others concentrating on economics of scale and advantages of size; all, especially the last, discussed in great depth in this book.

Many of them are based on the concept of the separation of ownership from control, one facet of which is the theory of "managerial capitalism" deriving originally from the now famous study of the giant American Corporation by Berle and Means in 1933.

Managers were said now to have the decisive control, to be the main decision takers, not the owners. They were stated to be interested not primarily in maximising profits but in growth, efficiency and their own status. Consequently a conflict of interest between managers and shareholders would arise since the latter would be very interested in maximising profits.

This theory is attacked in the book as being "too absolute, its extent exaggerated and its significance misinterpreted". Ownership is crucial to the control of firms which are the legal property of their equity owners. The struggle for the control of firms takes the form of battles between competing groups of shareholders (which often consist of other large undertakings) not as a straight battle between managers and shareholders. Mergers and takeovers are frequently undertaken in this way with the takeover group acquiring blocks of shares and, by various means (offers of advantageous exchange of shares, prospects of higher dividends once the firm has been taken over) winning majority shareholder support.

In addition, the authors show that very often managers are big shareholders themselves. They quote a study of executive incomes in the USA made in 1971 which states:

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> "In recent years the Executive of the country's largest industrial corporations have owned between $1 million and $2 million worth of their respective companies' capital stock."

and that "in terms of ownership these figures represent a three-fold or four-fold increase in ownership since the early 1940s".

Costs of Competition and Rivalry

An important concept bearing on the explanation of the growth of mergers and takeovers is that of the costs of competition and rivalry. The authors make the point that competition and rivalry between firms involve costs both to the firms concerned and to society at large.

The costs to the firms involved include "losses through reduction of market power, costs of competing through product innovation, advertising and the like, and the costs of maintaining a larger capital stock than otherwise to meet fluctuations in demand". Society suffers a lower level of production because of the diversion of resources devoted to competition and rivalry. For rivalry can be expected to lead to excess capacity.

Mergers and takeovers are stimulated and encouraged by the benefits of size. For big firms are more able to meet these costs than smaller ones, to diversify their production so that losses in one sphere are compensated by gains in others, to secure more favourable conditions for raising finance, to have closer and more advantageous contacts with governments and to have stronger positions on the stock exchange. But, as the authors say, many of the advantages of large size which accrue to the firm are at the expense of other economic agents and do not represent net benefits to the economy.

Nonetheless, it is this rivalry, both internally in Britain and between British firms and their foreign rivals, reflected in increased struggle for market power, which, in the authors' view, is the basic source and cause of concentration, mergers and takeovers for the period from the mid-fifties.

For the British economy is now in a difficult position, especially in the international dimension with the great economic growth of its rivals in Europe, Japan, USA. Internally it faces many problems—currency instability, inflation, stagnation, technical backwardness, etc. All these—described by the authors as "de-stabilising pressures"—raise very sharply the issues of market shares and market power, in an economy which is already oligopolistic.

The result is that "the attempt to overcome rivalry and reduce its costs stimulates mergers; mergers in turn involve costs (including costs of greater size) which may promote further mergers or defensive mergers by firms which may feel threatened by merger activity of rivals. One of the sources of concentration is strengthened".

The authors' basic standpoint with regard to the development of concentration, mergers and takeovers is that they arise inevitably from the development of competition between capitalist enterprises, which, in turn, arises from the basic aim of capitalist production—the drive for profits.

The answer to this massive concentration of capital in private hands, as the authors rightly say in their last chapter, "can only be by way of various forms of public and co-operative ownership".

This is an enormously well researched and documented book, containing many new insights into Britain's economic structure, of particular interest to professional economists with much valuable material for all those engaged in the struggle against monopoly capital.

One might have wished for more discussion of the political implications of the growth of oligopoly, of the impact of the multi-national firms and of the EEC on the British economy, likewise concerning the nature and features of Britain's current crisis and their effect on concentration and mergers. But these matters may have been seen by the authors as outside the scope of their book.

For all its deeply theoretical content it is written in a refreshingly flexible style, the complexity of the subject matter being treated in a non-dogmatic fashion.

The work is, therefore, a notable contribution to the analysis of Britain's economic structure.

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Document:

Statement on the Elections to the Constituent Assembly of April 25th, 1975

(We print below a statement issued on April 26, 1975, by the Political Commission of the Central Committee of the Portuguese Communist Party.)

1. The elections to the Constituent Assembly held on April 25, 1975, marked a significant moment for the Portuguese people in the construction of the new democratic Portugal. For the first time in half a century it was possible for the Portuguese to vote in freedom throughout most of the country. The PCP wishes to underline the serenity and the civic consciousness shown by the popular masses in the electoral act (in contrast to the violence, provocations and threats of the reactionaries, including those of the leftist groups).

2. The massive turn-out to the ballot boxes contains a contradiction; on the one side it indicates the wish of the masses to take part in political life, but on the other side it is an indication of the pressures used to make the exercise of the right to vote almost obligatory, even for those who had not formed an opinion.

3. The result of the elections shows that the Portuguese people are in favour of the pursuit of democratic policies and a socialist way forward, in accord with the recent platform signed by the Movement of the Armed Forces (MFA) and the political parties. Although this prospect is not yet clearly defined and although it is interpreted in different ways, this activity is shared by ever greater masses of the population. In that sense the elections confirm what the reality of Portuguese political life has already shown.

4. The voting confirmed that the reactionary right can count on little popular support. In spite of the practical non-existence of freedom in vast regions, a situation to which the PCP has often called attention, which allowed the formation of voting agreements, and in spite of their efforts to cover themselves in parties declaring themselves democratic, the reactionary right got only modest results. The Portuguese people showed that they do not wish to return to fascism.

5. Through its massive votes and high percentages the PCP proved its implantation in working-class areas and among the rural proletariat of the South. Conversely, in vast areas, the low vote of the PCP illustrated the legacy of obscurantism left by fascism and confirmed the existing anti-democratic situation, the effects of the violent anti-Communist campaign and the intrigues and slanders against the PCP launched by numerous forces grouped in a "Holy Alliance" and using the broadest methods including television, the hierarchical pressure, the Vatican, and foreign circles that interfered in the Portuguese elections, and creating an atmosphere of instability and lies about an imminent coup from the right should the PCP get a high vote. Such a campaign could not help but influence the results.

6. It must also be underlined that in its revolutionary activity the PCP is absolutely against the use of demagogy and is not afraid to clarify situations and to take less popular positions whenever this is required for the defence of the democratic situation and by the interests of the revolutionary process. Demagogy and the facile appeal can win votes. But above preoccupation with the need for votes the PCP always acted, even in the electoral campaign, with a sense of the responsibility demanded by its role in the defence of the political situation and in the construction of the new democratic Portugal. It would be a mistake to think that the vote is the only measure of the strength and influence of the parties. The voting does not reflect, by a long way, the strength of the PCP, its influence, or its ability to mobilise the masses.

7. The elections just held are a new and rich experience. Given their exact and limited objective—the elaboration of the Constitution—and given the pact established between the MFA and the political parties about the general lines of the Constitution, the holding of the elections will not

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result in any significant alterations in the political situation. The revolutionary process continues according to its own original dynamic, all the victories gained will be defended and maintained, and profound economic and social transformations will open the road to socialism. At the head of the mass of workers, considering the alliance People-MFA the guarantee of freedom and the driving force of the revolution, the PCP will continue to fulfil its duties as the revolutionary vanguard of the working class and of the working people. *(Translated by Ted Slade)*

Discussion Contribution on:

Inflation and Marxist Theory

P. K. Hall

In explaining the causes of inflation by "temporary or chance" phenomena, by factors essentially outside "the process of capitalist price formation", Ron Bellamy denies the central role of monopoly.[1] Inflation is redefined to make its existence without these factors impossible while the possibility of a common pricing policy among capitalists is ruled out in a one-sided picture of capitalism (albeit in the guise of a critique of an equally incorrect picture of the "collective" capitalist). Not only is his method unscientific but his evidence is suspect and, at times, self-contradictory.

In seeking to amend its definition, Ron Bellamy confines inflation to price rises since 1968 which can, he claims, be "rightly called inflation" since they "have increased with quite a different tempo" in comparison to rises before that year. He does not explain, however, why this *quantitative* change in the rate of inflation has wrought *qualitative* changes deserving a re-definition. Neither does he offer a new definition for pre-1968 price rises which previously he held to be "... the commonsense meaning of the term"[2] but which now seem "a misuse of terms to describe such increases as 'inflation'."

The "common sense" of 1957 is the "complexity" of 1975! One Professor Machlup quoted in support of the latter, has even discovered that while Japanese consumer prices almost doubled between 1953 and 1970, "export prices actually fell!" This "discovery", however, was known to Lenin who wrote in 1916:

> "... the cartels and finance capital have a system peculiar to themselves, that of 'exporting goods at cut-rate prices', or 'dumping' as the English call it: within a given country the cartel sells its goods at high monopoly prices, but sells them abroad at a much lower price to undercut the competitor, to enlarge its own production to the utmost etc."[3]

The new use of formerly accepted terminology arises from the belief that pre-1968 increases were unremarkable and "relatively modest when viewed in a long historical perspective". Quantitatively, this may be so but, as Marxists, we must not confuse the thing itself with the speed of its motion.

Importance of Inflation Rate

Undoubtedly the rate of inflation is of the utmost importance in determining the nature of inflation and its relationship to the decay of capitalist society from whence it arises. But whatever its rate, its very existence at a time of falling values is remarkable. With a continuous advance in productive technology it is an extraordinary phenomenon that prices should have doubled in the past 30-40 years.[4] By no longer recognising the existence of inflation before 1968 Ron Bellamy neatly sidesteps the theoretical questions posed by a generation of rising prices. His thesis rests on the belief that inflation has arisen since 1968 due to three or four factors peculiar to this period

[1] See "More on Inflation" by Ron Bellamy—*Marxism Today*, November 1974.

[2] See "Wages, Prices and Inflation" by Ron Bellamy—*Marxism Today*, November 1957, p. 42.

[3] See Lenin "Selected Works", Lawrence & Wishart (single volume edition), p. 252.

[4] See, for example, Table 37 "Industry and Empire" by E. J. Hobsbawm (Penguin 1969).

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—factors which, moreover, appear independent of class.

Discussion on inflation between Marxists has been characterised by "objectivist" versus "subjectivist" interpretations, which, on the one hand, find its causes in capitalism without capitalists and, on the other, among capitalists without the laws of capitalism. Both are, of course, unscientific and at best explain only isolated facts.

Inflation as a continuous, permanent, upward movement of prices, impervious to the downward adjustment normally expected during a slump, and apparently in contradiction to Marx's law of value, is a modern phenomenon which corresponds to the full development of state monopoly capitalism in a period of general crisis. That the contradiction between price and value should deepen, even to the point where it threatens to rend asunder capitalist market relations, can come as no surprise. The possibility of such an antagonism is inherent in the price-value relationship and monopoly does not abolish the contradictions of capitalism; rather it develops them to their extreme. Capitalists face these growing antagonisms with deepening desperation as each remedy merely serves to deepen them.

Unity of Class Interests Denied

The "solution" put forward by individuals and parties loyal to capitalism at once reflect both the contradictions within the system and the different responses to them arising from national or sectional interests. But to construct a world of isolated, "differentiated" capitalists is as one-sided as the "collective", unified capitalist. To argue, as Ron Bellamy does, that the relations between capitalists are solely "those of a temporary, conditional unity of opposites" is tantamount to denying the existence of capitalists *as a class, with permanent, unconditional unity of objective class interests.* However much the subjective interpretation of those interests differ, however intense becomes the war of the market place, there always exists a *class* of exploiters opposed to a class of exploited, a *class* which appropriates surplus-value and a class which creates it.

Indeed, even the continued conflicts between rival capitalist groupings arise precisely because of their common nature, the common desire to maximise profits and win a larger share of the market. Unity thus appears as its opposite, disunity. And in their disunity, capitalists express nothing more than their class, their unity.

While relations between capitalists "are ones of growing antagonism", they are also ones of growing unity. The growth of monopolies has, on the one hand, intensified the struggle for supremacy among them but, on the other hand, has simultaneously concentrated more wealth in the hands of fewer capitalists. The growing strength of socialism and national liberation has confined inter-capitalist competition to an ever-decreasing geographical area but has also forced monopoly to seek new means of uniting their common interests in military and economic pacts.

The world of growing antagonism yet growing unity is reflected in inter-state relations—normally manifested in a careful attempt to balance the national and international aspirations of the monopolies. The intensified struggle for market superiority is in contrast to the unity displayed by monopoly when faced with workers' demands. Increasingly negotiations take place on an all-industry basis and the national strike and national agreement have become commonplace.

Marxist theory must not only faithfully reflect and explain reality but must also provide a meaningful guide to action.[5] Comrade Bellamy's "own picture of capitalist reality" does neither; it is one-sided, incomplete and misleading. The "fragmented, atomistic" individuality of each capitalist is conditioned by his interest as a member of a class. To emphasise the "conditional nature of any relationship of stability temporarily established" at the expense of class interests existing permanently outside particular "relationships" erodes the concept of class. In practice, our revolutionary strategy would become tactics; the class war, a series of skirmishes against a "fragmented" enemy. The world of the "collective" capitalist does not exist, neither does the world of entrepreneur Crusoe.

Inflation—"Temporary" or "Chance"

Although aiming to demolish the "collective" capitalist, Comrade Bellamy's "picture" also seeks to uphold his contention that "temporary or chance" phenomena are responsible for inflation. Since there is only a fragile, temporary meeting of interests, there can be no concerted, prolonged action by the capitalist class as a whole. Such an action as the deliberate raising of prices above values on a massive scale for a long period is therefore ruled out. But not only does Ron Bellamy forget that class interests exist alongside the disunity of individual interests, he also forgets that the monopolists are the dominant section whose interests are increasingly secured through state action. The state, moreover, as representative of the whole class, can and often does step in to ensure that class interests prevail over this or that individual monopoly.

His lack of understanding about "capitalist

[5] As indeed Ron Bellamy aimed to achieve in his 1957 article.

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reality" causes Comrade Bellamy to misinterpret and misrepresent the role of monopoly in inflation. "Why," he asks, "did Lenin, for example, (pay) so little attention to monopoly pricing in 'Imperialism'?" Was it because he was more concerned with "monopoly ... as a characteristic of capitalism in general" or did he have other things on his mind in 1916?

Unfortunately, the questions are left unanswered but we are told that, "For the working class, except insofar as it is unable to compensate by wage increases for the *monopolistic raising of prices* of wage-goods ... monopoly capitalism has other and more important implications". (Emphasis added.) Comrade Bellamy gave himself enough rope! By stating the obvious he has destroyed his own case. He has let slip that, although other implications may be important, there is a time when the working class concerns itself with rising prices, i.e. with inflation! Inflation, moveover, caused by "the monopolistic raising of the price of wage goods".

Had Ron Bellamy reflected a little more on what was written in "Imperialism" he would have realised that monopoly price-fixing was well known to Lenin. Cartels, Lenin writes, "... fix prices".[6] They "... have already begun to come 'close to one another, to reach 'an understanding' about prices etc".[7] The setting up of monopoly prices enabled the American Sugar Trust, for instance, to pay a 70 per cent dividend.[8] Lenin was aware not only of the immediate implications ("It is sufficient to mention the high cost of living ...".[9]) but also of the profound long term effect price-fixing has on the capitalist economy. The reaping of easy profits through high prices erodes the need for technical innovation and strengthens further the tendency to stagnate and decay engendered by monopoly.[10]

Lenin observed monopoly at the dawn of its reign; not all its features had developed fully nor had it yet entered the period of general crisis which followed the November Revolution. The extent of price-rigging had, so far, been limited; a Dr. Kestner, quoted by Lenin, observed that,

> "'The prolonged raising of prices which results from the formation of cartels ... has hitherto been observed only in relation to the most important means of production, particularly coal, iron and potassium, but has never been observed in relation to manufactured goods. Similarly, the increase in profits resulting from this raising of prices has been limited only to the industries which produce means of production.... (They) not only secure advantages from the cartel formation in the shape of high profits ... but secure also a dominating position over the latter....'"[11]

Monopoly Everywhere

It is not difficult to see, therefore, that the consolidation of monopoly control of "wage goods" production and retail distribution has enabled the prolonged raising of prices "which results from the formation of cartels" to be extended to all branches of production. Indeed, we now have monopoly production of raw materials, of finished goods and monopoly wholesale and retail distribution. The world of the mid-seventies is not that of 1916. Surely therefore the development of monopoly during the last 60 years deserves more attention from Marxists than simply reflecting on why Lenin did or did not concern himself with this or that topic!

Alongside the desire to raise profits, monopolistic inflation also serves political ends since the growth of anti-imperialist forces has presented the monopolists with political problems vital to their survival. The need to prove Marx wrong is hindered by the reality of capitalism while the development of the working class movement has necessitated more refined methods of exploitation. The growth of internal organisation within monopoly and its growing domination over society gave rise to illusions of the "planned' and manageable capitalism. Keynes and others now advocated manipulation of taxation, credit, and national budgets as the path to the politically and ideologically necessary crisis-free capitalism. Price rises were advocated as a "painless" way to cut wages without opposition.

Practically and economically, monopoly is committed to a policy of inflation. That is not to say, however, that inflation arises accidentally or as a phenomenon imposed upon the laws of capitalism. The contradiction contained within the value-price relationship provides the inherent possibility of the serious cleavage which becomes a reality under monopoly capitalism.

Furthermore, monopolistic inflation gives rise to an increase in the general level of prices. Government, non-monopoly and petty-bourgeois sections are all forced to pay high monopoly prices. To survive, they too must raise their prices while rises resulting from Government taxation and fiscal policies, carried out on behalf of the big companies, add to this general rise and help create the illusion of inflation arising outside monopoly.

[6] Lenin, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 183.
[8] *Ibid*, p. 206.
[9] See *ibid*, p. 260.
[10] See *ibid*, p. 241.
[11] *Ibid*, p. 185.

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Price and value are thus torn asunder by monopoly, their contradiction is resolved by force as value no longer finds its approximate reflection in price. But this process was itself contradictory. On the one hand, monopoly reduces its prices, sometimes to below value, forcing the non-monopoly sector to monopolise or into bankruptcy. On the other hand, once supreme, it began the systematic raising of prices known as inflation.[12] Indeed, it could afford to do nothing else: profits would inevitably sink if prices were allowed to faithfully reflect the vast decline in value brought about by technological advance and increasing socialisation of production.

Price and Value—Opposite Poles

Of course, to quote Ron Bellamy, "an increased need to do something is an entirely different matter from ability to do it". The forcible exclusion of value and price to opposite poles could not be accomplished without fundamental changes in other spheres of the capitalist economy. These changes, moreover, at once allowed an inflationary policy to be pursued and themselves contributed to a deepening of the value-price rift. In particular, monopoly required that money be as divorced from value as price, that it be easily debased and becomes merely a nominal measure of value. The large-scale creation of credit alongside the issue of paper-money on a large scale created the means by which inflation could be pursued.

Need and ability are indeed "entirely different" but their relationship is not a passive one. An increased need leads to an increased pursuit for the means of satisfying that need. Monopoly is not a bystander but an active participant in an ever-changing world; it seeks to alter that world to its advantage and to satisfy its desires. The conditions necessary for inflation arise in the course of modern capitalist development and from the actions of state monopoly capitalism. Both need and ability to satisfy that need are engendered in the world of monopoly.

Writing in 1957, Ron Bellamy said:

> "Since capitalists are unwilling to accept a cut in profits, they will raise prices if they can. These conditions under which they can ... depend, at full employment, upon the level of state expenditures, upon state fiscal and monetary policies and upon the presence and effectiveness of price control."[13]

Exactly! Ron Bellamy precisely pinpointed the dialectic of possibility and reality, need and ability in the world of inflation. Today, he has not only thrown the baby out with the bath-water but has refilled the tub with water so murky that he does not realise the baby is missing.

In his critique of the role of monopoly, Comrade Bellamy not only rejects what he said in 1957 but also forgets that inflation is a general, all-embracing phenomenon against which the experience of a single, "pure"[14] example is inadequate. Undoubtedly, Richard Marsh did discover that "demand was elastic" but he has not been deterred from raising rail fares. Furthermore in its pricing policies, British Rail is forced to consider broader political and social factors which do not affect private monopolies. It is also possible that the weakest monopolies will lose the battle in the inflationary war, just as in former times they lost by price-cutting. Indeed, inflation can act in this way to increase the degree of monopolisation.[15]

A New Academic Viewpoint

In support of his case, Comrade Bellamy presents the readers of *Marxism Today* with a new "academic" viewpoint, with compliments from "the well financed" US National Bureau of Economic Research. The Bureau asked monopolists how much they paid for petroleum, rubber, paper pulp and chemicals and found that prices moved down. Unfortunately we are not told from whom the commodities were bought, whether from a monopoly or non-monopoly or colonial source; nor are we told the behaviour of the selling-prices of the finished goods. Furthermore, the survey seems of little help to Ron Bellamy in his explanation of inflation today, since it covers the period 1957-1966 during which time inflation did not exist for him.

The new features of the last six years which provide for Ron Bellamy not only the dynamics of inflation but also its cause, consist of a schematic list, devoid of class analysis. Inflation appears as an accidental and nature-given phenomenon superimposed upon capitalism rather than arising from its very heart. Although he does not "find it in the least hard to understand" why the combination of his factors "has produced a sharp upsurge of prices on a world scale" (one might amend to "capitalist world"), Comrade

[12] These two aspects still exist. Slight and temporary reductions of the inflated price are now used increasingly by monopoly—especially in retail competition.

[13] *Marxism Today*, November 1957, p. 47.

[14] Of course, no "pure" monopoly exists. Certainly British Rail is not subject to a competing rail network but alternative means of transport is an important competitive factor in the relative position of the railway.

[15] The Burmah Oil Company affair is a case in point.

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Bellamy does not help lesser minds by spending a mere two paragraphs on this aspect of his thesis.

The shortage of certain agricultural products causes only temporary, isolated rises which on their own are not inflationary. They can contribute to inflation when monopolies (or their governments) create or worsen shortages,[16] undertake speculative buying and deliberately prevent a return to "normal" prices upon a good harvest. The prevention of a fall in prices is an important inflationary weapon of the monopolies.

Speculation in commodities and land has undoubtedly led to price rises, but, once again, we must not lose sight of the class reality of modern speculation. Monopoly plays the decisive role whether in actual dealings or in financing speculation. (The recent admissions of losses made by Lloyds Bank in "unofficial" currency dealings or by Cadburys in the cocoa market reflect only the tip of the speculative iceberg.)

The growth of Euro-currencies is not an accidental step divorced from the interests of multinational monopolies. The need for "stateless money" over which individual governments have little control has grown with the development of "stateless companies" transcending national frontiers. The breakdown of the International System and the consequent growth of international paper money did not create inflation. It did, however, provide the basis for its further development by international monopoly on a world scale.

Inflation and the General Crisis

In analysing the sharp upsurge of inflation on a world scale, consideration must not only be given to the aggravation of its economic laws and the response of capitalists but also to developments in the general crisis of capitalism. Undoubtedly the rapid growth of multi-national companies, the ever-increasing export of capital and intertwining of capitalist economies have contributed to a world-wide inflation. But equally without doubt, this rise in world prices is a symptom of a new acute phase in the world crisis of imperialism.

Inflation is at once a symptom and a contributory factor in this crisis. Pursued as a conscious policy, it is also the outcome of an inherent antagonism within the heart of capitalist production. This dual nature, moreover contains the possibility of an uncontrolled inflation in which large-scale disruption takes place in the capitalist economies and in which inflation ceases to be profitable even for the ruling classes.

[16] It is worth reflecting, for instance, on the new-found "availability" of sugar since steep increases were announced at the beginning of January.

Inflation can become bound up with developments essentially outside it; the unconscious laws of capitalism and the crises they engender destroy all illusions of "manageable" capitalism. Price can no longer be manipulated at will but now assumes the appearance of an uncontrollable force outside and above society. Supply and demand are turned on their heads as prices continue to rise even when supply is plentiful and demand small.

To the individual monopolist, his own action in raising prices is seen as a response to, not a cause of, inflation. Price rises are no longer a way to easy profits but a matter of survival. As inflation appears to exist outside his own actions, so too does his ideology seek its' causes externally in wage-rises, the Arabs or the weather.

It is therefore vital that in its battle against inflation, the working class understands the true nature of the problem; that it does not enter battle against an illusory many-headed monster but strikes at the heart of inflation—monopoly. Its struggle must become more than economic for monopoly will constantly seek an excuse to destroy democratic rights. Indeed, the struggle for a decent living standard will inevitably link with the wider democratic fight, and pose problems demanding a revolutionary answer.

Editorial Comments

Concluded from p. 195

needs. The measures adopted have in each case marked distinctive features. In general, the East European countries have tended to give greater scope to enterprises and to place greater reliance on economic and financial mechanisms than has been the case in the Soviet Union. There are marked differences, too, in the approach to foreign trade. In the Soviet Union no enterprise has the right of direct access to foreign markets, whereas this right is enjoyed by many enterprises in a number of the East European countries. In Poland workers even receive part of export receipts in the form of bonuses, while in a number of countries part of foreign exchange receipts can be retained by exporting firms to enable them to import machinery and raw materials.

It is unfortunate that costs have prevented the inclusion of the documentation which is so useful a feature of the French edition. An excellent rendering of the text is marred by occasional oddities like "Brejnev" instead of the more customary English form "Brezhnev".

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